FROM THE WORLD OF FABLEWOOD...

FICTION SQUAD™

NO.5 OF 6

JENKINS & BACHS & PACIAROTTI

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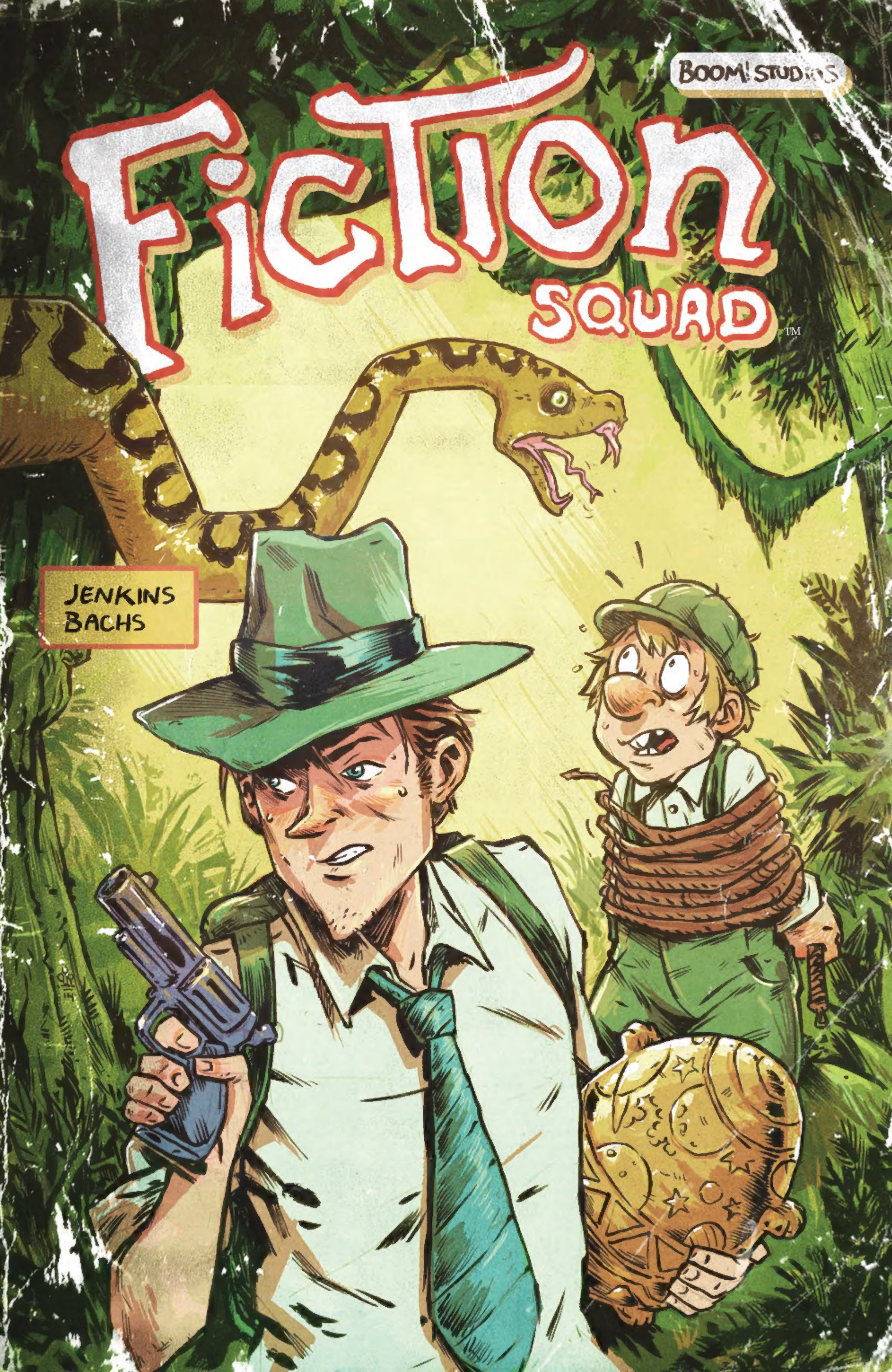
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FICTION SQUAD™

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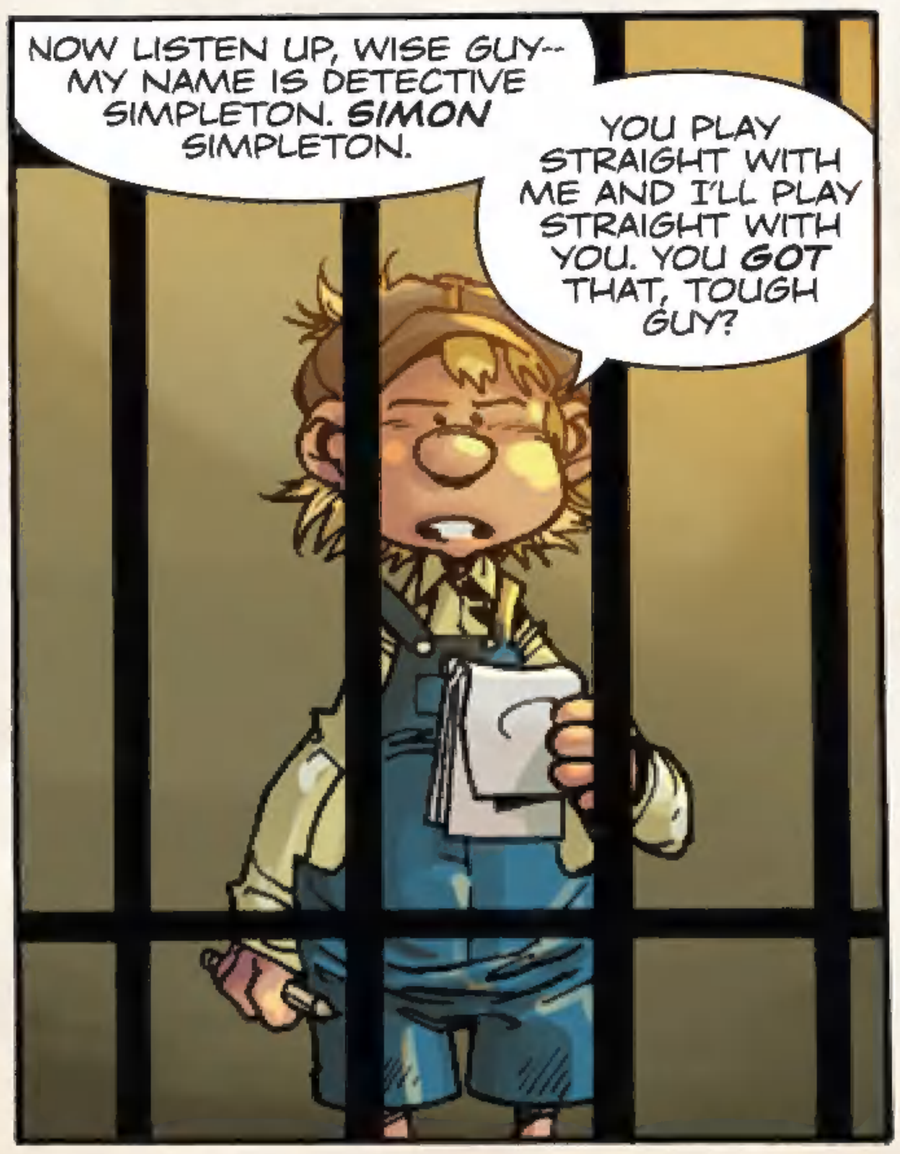
MY NAME IS DETECTIVE FRANKIE MACK. I'M A FAILURE.
PAN WUZ HERE

I'M THE GOOD GUY WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO CATCH THE BAD GUY, AND FAILED. I WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE A NEW LIFE, BUT I FAILED AT THAT TOO.

JUST TO RUB SALT IN THE WOUND, THE KILLER I FAILED TO CATCH HAS MADE IT ACROSS THE GENRE BORDER TO THE CHILDREN'S REALM.
HE'S HERE, SOMEWHERE IN THE HEART OF RIMES. HE'S BEHIND ALL OF THIS. AND NOBODY BELIEVES ME.

I'VE BEEN CHASING AFTER SHADOWS-- MADE TO LOOK LIKE A FOOL.
I WAS GETTING SET UP THE WHOLE TIME, AND I COULDN'T SEE IT.

I MUST BE THE DUMBEST MAN ALIVE.


NOW LISTEN UP, WISE GUY-- MY NAME IS DETECTIVE SIMPLETON. SIMON SIMPLETON.
YOU PLAY STRAIGHT WITH ME AND I'LL PLAY STRAIGHT WITH YOU. YOU GOT THAT, TOUGH GUY?

SECOND DUMBEST.

SIMON, I SWEAR IF YOU DON'T GET ME OUT OF HERE I'M GOING TO KILL YOU--
I'LL PUT THAT IN MY NOTES. NOW THEN...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN THE ACCUSED? AND DON'T LIE TO ME, TWINKLES. YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME WHEN I'M ANGRY.

SIMON, YOU IDIOT, IT WASN'T ME! IT WAS MY GUY FROM CRIME REALM--HE SET ME UP!
A LIKELY STORY!

LOOK, YOU IGNORAMUS, DID IT OCCUR TO YOU THAT WHILE I'M ROTTING IN JAIL, OUR PERP IS CARRYING OUT HIS PLAN WITHOUT ANYONE TO STOP HIM?
OH, WHY DO I EVEN BOTHER? JUST GO FETCH ONE OF THE KIDS--

KRSHHH

THAT'S THE ONE, OFFICER! HE'S THE ONE WHO STOLE MY GOLDEN EGG! I'D RECOGNIZE HIM ANYWHERE!
IT WAS DARK AND HE WAS A LOT SMALLER, BUT I KNOW IT WAS HIM! I WANT TO PRESS CHARGES!

WELL, WELL... FRANKIE MACK. I KNEW IT THE FIRST TIME I LAID EYES ON YOU: YOU'RE NO GOOD.
WE WERE ALWAYS GONNA BRING YOU DOWN, FRANKIE. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

YOU SET ME UP, YOU LITTLE PIPSQUEAK. YOU AND YOUR FRIEND WHO'S BEEN PULLING YOUR STRINGS ALL ALONG. I OUGHTA WRING YOUR SCRAWNY LITTLE NECK--

THAT TEMPER'S GONNA LAND YOU IN HOT WATER ONE OF THESE DAYS, MACK. BUT NOT FOR A WHILE.
I HEAR THE WATER IN RIMES COUNTY JAIL IS ALWAYS ONE DEGREE ABOVE FREEZING.

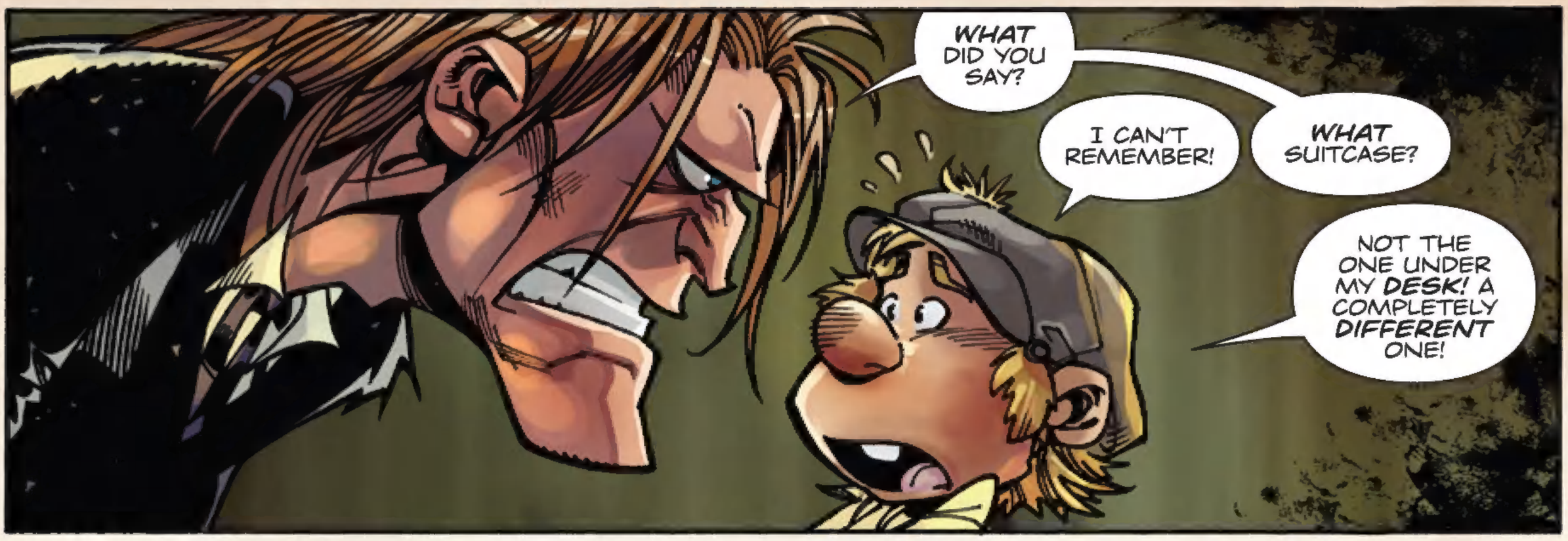
DETECTIVE FRANKIE MACK: I HEREBY PROCLAIM THAT YOU ARE TO BE STRIPPED OF YOUR RANK AND SENT TO PRISON FOR A TERM OF TEN YEARS.
UPON YOUR RELEASE, YOU WILL BE DEPORTED TO THE REALM OF CRIME, WHERE YOU WILL LIVE OUT YOUR DAYS UNDER A CLOUD OF SHAME UNTIL YOUR STORY IS FORGOTTEN.

MISTER MAYOR, THERE'S SOMETHING ROTTEN IN THIS TOWN--ROTTEN TO THE CORE! I GOT SET UP, AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT!
THE MADONNAS AND THE WITCHES ARE ABOUT TO TEAR THIS CITY APART, AND THEY'RE NOT DOING IT ALONE--

YOU HAVE NO EVIDENCE, MISTER MACK.
NO EVIDENCE. NO PROOF. NO HOPE. AND NO WAY OUT OF YOUR PREDICAMENT.

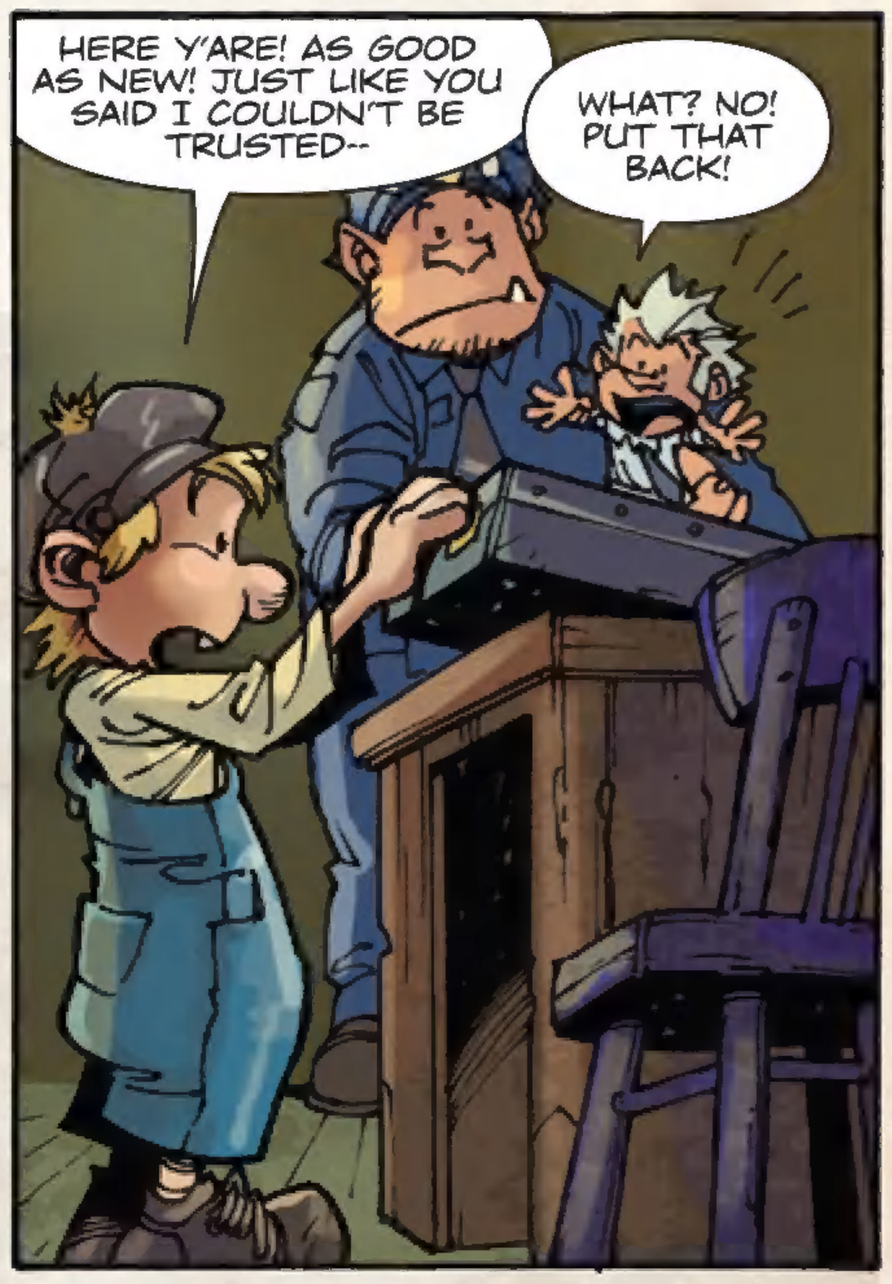
RIGHT. NO EVIDENCE.
EXCEPT HUMPTY'S MOUTH IN A SUITCASE.

WHAT...?


WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I CAN'T REMEMBER!
WHAT SUITCASE?
NOT THE ONE UNDER MY DESK! A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ONE!

SEE, FRANKIE TOLD ME IT WAS AN OPEN AN' SHUT CASE. BUT THEN CAPTAIN THUMB SAID THE CASE WAS CLOSED. AND THEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO GIVE IT TO BERNIE IN THE EVIDENCE ROOM BUT THE CAPTAIN TOLD ME TO THROW IT AWAY INSTEAD--
W-WAITAMINNIT... DON'T LISTEN TO THIS IDIOT!

RIGHT, SO. YOU SAID BECAUSE I WAS SUCH AN IDIOT I COULD NEVER BE COUNTED ON FOR ANYTHING. SO NO ONE WOULD COMPLAIN IF I THREW THE CASE AWAY.
SIMPLETON
I DIDN'T WANT NO ONE TO COMPLAIN, SO I KEPT IT.


HERE Y'ARE! AS GOOD AS NEW! JUST LIKE YOU SAID I COULDN'T BE TRUSTED--
WHAT? NO! PUT THAT BACK!

LISTEN TO ME! THIS IS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CASE! IT DOESN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE THE SAME ONE!

IT'S THE SAME ONE, ALL RIGHT! I KEPT IT GOOD AN' SAFE, JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME NOT TO--
DON'T OPEN THAT!

THUMB? IS THAT YOU?
TOM THUMB! WHEN I GET OUTTA HERE, I'M GONNA MAKE YOU PAY FOR THIS!

YOU MISERABLE LITTLE MIDGET! YOU WERE PAID TO DO AS THE MADONNAS TOLD YOU AND FIND THE EGG, NOT DO AS YOU PLEASED!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! HE'S LYING! OH, LOOK! A SEAGULL! LA LA LA!

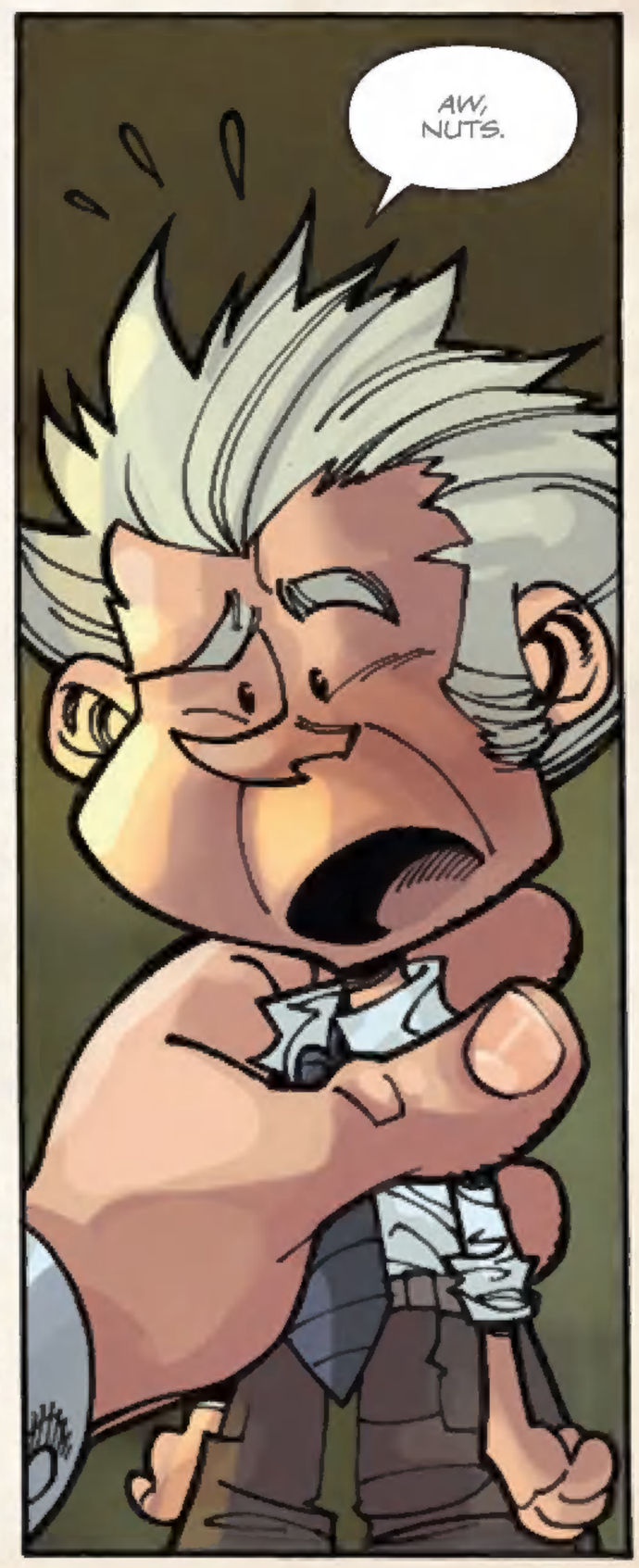
YOU WERE WORKING FOR THE CARD FAMILY, YOU LITTLE WEASEL, AND YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED US!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MAKE THE SOUTHSIDE WITCH LOOK BAD, NOT KILL HER! JUST LIKE A MUNCHKIN NOT TO FOLLOW ORDERS!

I TOLD YOU TO SHUT UP, HUMPTY, YOU FAT IDIOT! I'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT IF YOU CAN'T KEEP YER YAP SHUT!
THEY'VE GOT MACK IN CUSTODY! HE'LL TAKE THE RAP IF YOU JUST KEEP YOUR STUPID MOUTH SHUT FOR FIVE MINUTES!

ERR... THAT IS...

WANT ME TO DO THE HONORS, MISTER MAYOR?
QUITE.

CAPTAIN TOM THUMB, I HEREBY CHARGE YOU WITH FRAUD, EGG-NAPPING, AND THE AQUACIDE OF THE SOUTHSIDE WITCH.
SIMON, FOR AN IDIOT, YOU ARE A GENIUS.


AW, NUTS.

COUPLA DAYS LATER:
THE CITY RETURNS TO NORMAL. THOUGH FOR A PLACE LIKE RIMES, "NORMAL" IS ANYTHING BUT.

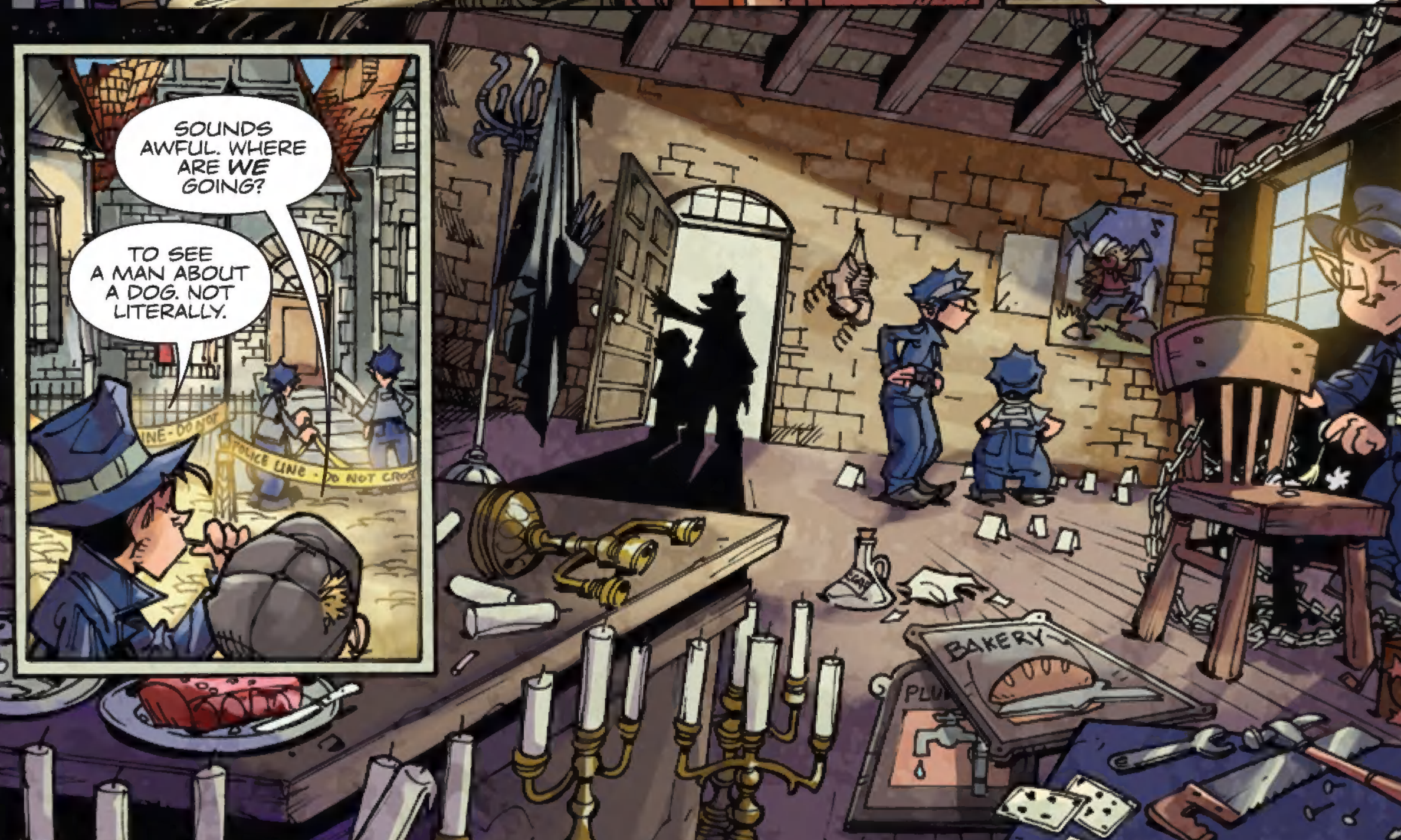
WE PUT HUMPTY'S MOUTH ONTO AN OLD POTATO, AND SEND HIM INTO THE WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM.

MEANTIME, THE WAR BETWEEN THE MADONNAS AND THE WITCHES CONTINUES TO ESCALATE. WHILE EVERYONE ELSE JUST DUCKS FOR COVER AND HOPES FOR THE WAR TO END.

WORLD MYTHOLOGY
...OKAY... GOLDEN EGG... SCOTCH EGG... DEVILLED EGG... SCRAMBLED EGG... WORLD EGG...

THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE ANSWER!
THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF EGGS

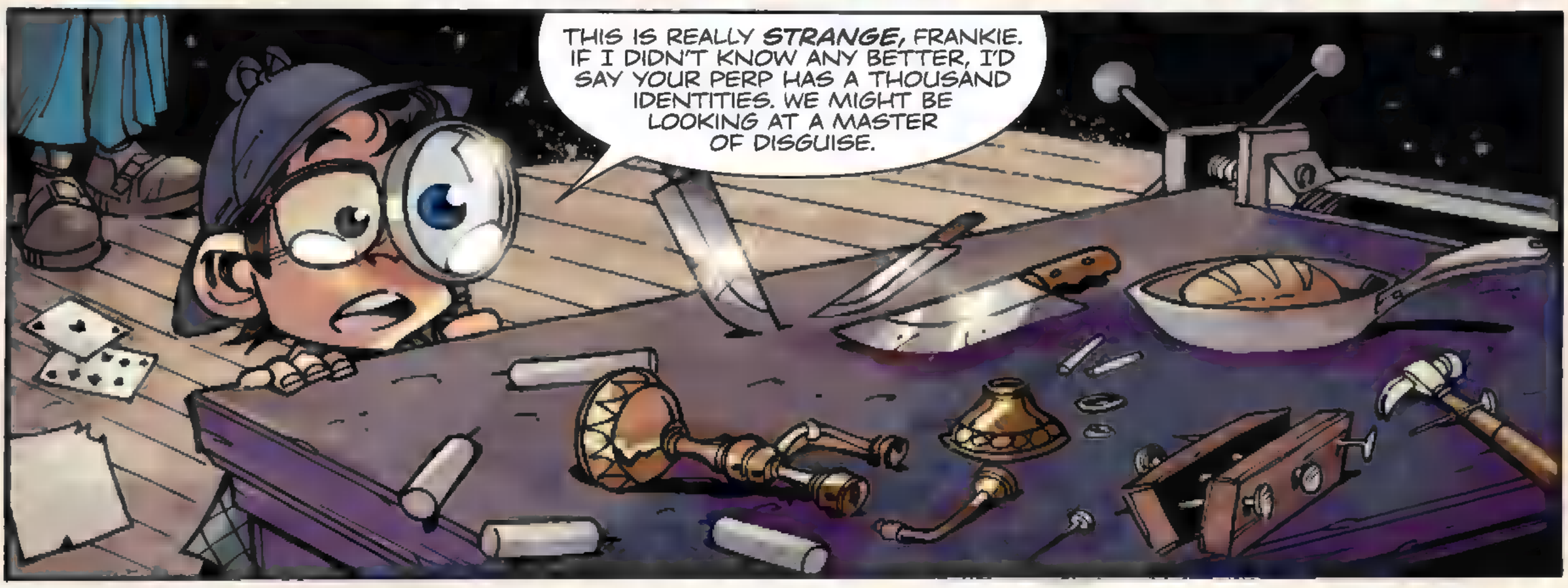
...SO I HEARD THEY SENT TOM THUMB TO COVENTRY. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT IS BUT IT DOESN'T SOUND SO GOOD, FRANKIE.
IT'S NOT. IT'S SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE CLEANERS AND THE GALLOWS. AND NOBODY THERE LIKES MUNCHKINS.


SOUNDS AWFUL. WHERE ARE WE GOING?
TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A DOG. NOT LITERALLY.
BAKERY

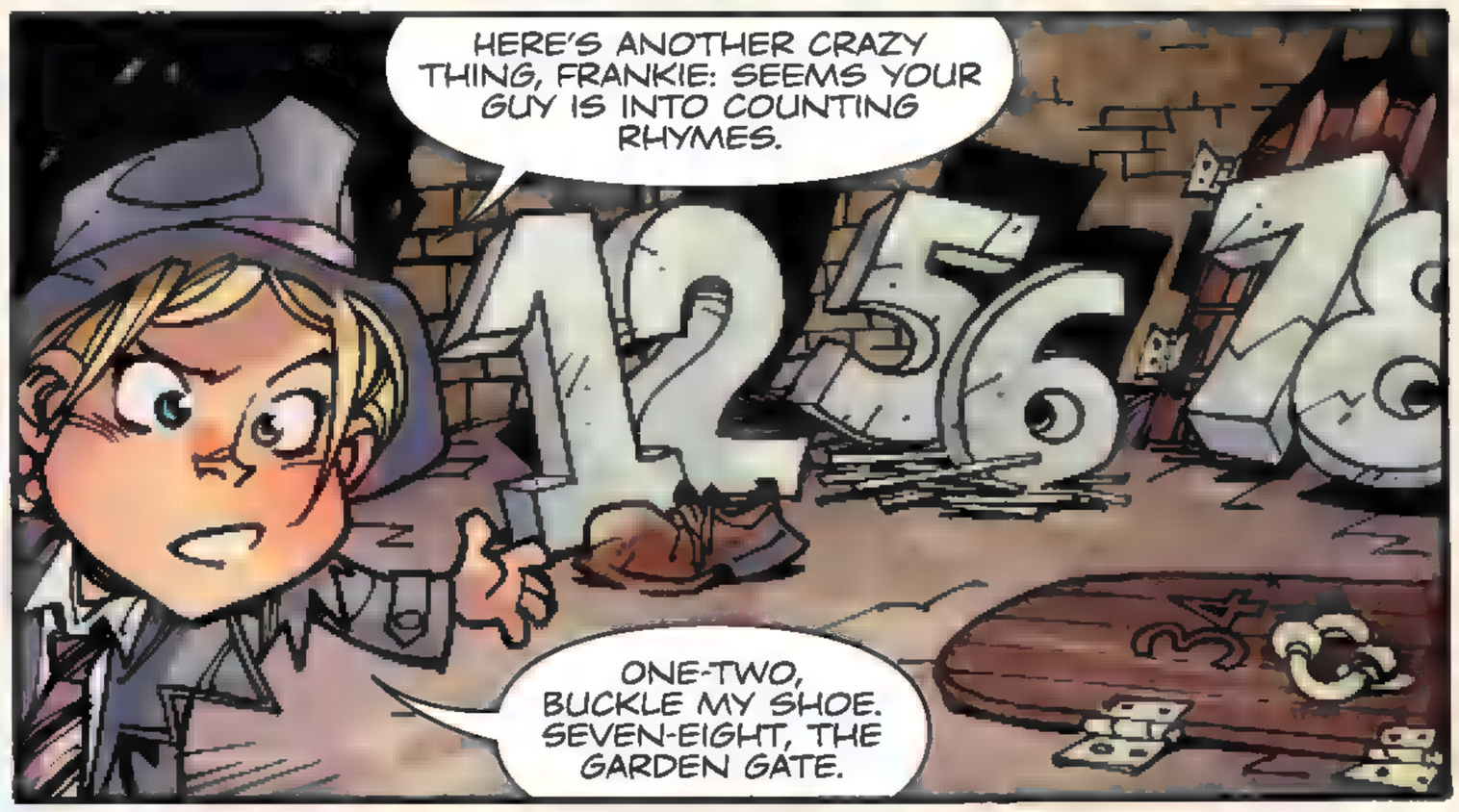
HIYA, FRANKIE. LOOKS LIKE YOUR GUY WAS UP TO NO GOOD.
YEAH. HIS HIDEOUT IS A TREASURE TROVE OF CLUES. IT'S A GOOD JOB PANSYBELL PUT A TRACE ON THIS LOCATION.
4

OOH! OOH! I DID THAT! RAINBOW PONIES, EVERYONE!
YEAH, THAT'S GREAT, PANSY. YOU DID JUST FINE.
NOW YOU WANNA GIVE US A LITTLE SPACE HERE WHILE WE DO SOME POLICE WORK?

HMPH. YOU'RE SUCH AN OGRE, FRANKIE MACK, YOU UNGRATEFUL GRUMP. I SHOULD'VE LEFT YOU ALL TRUSSED UP LIKE A PIG WHERE I FOUND YOU!


THIS IS REALLY STRANGE, FRANKIE. IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I'D SAY YOUR PERP HAS A THOUSAND IDENTITIES. WE MIGHT BE LOOKING AT A MASTER OF DISGUISE.

THERE'S EVIDENCE HE WAS WORKING AT VARIOUS TIMES AS A BUTCHER, A BAKER AND A CANDLESTICK MAKER. WE THINK THIS GUY HAS BEEN A TRADESMAN AS WELL. THIS IS A BUILDER'S INSIGNIA.
THERE ARE ITEMS FROM EVERY REALM, FRANKIE--EVEN YOURS.

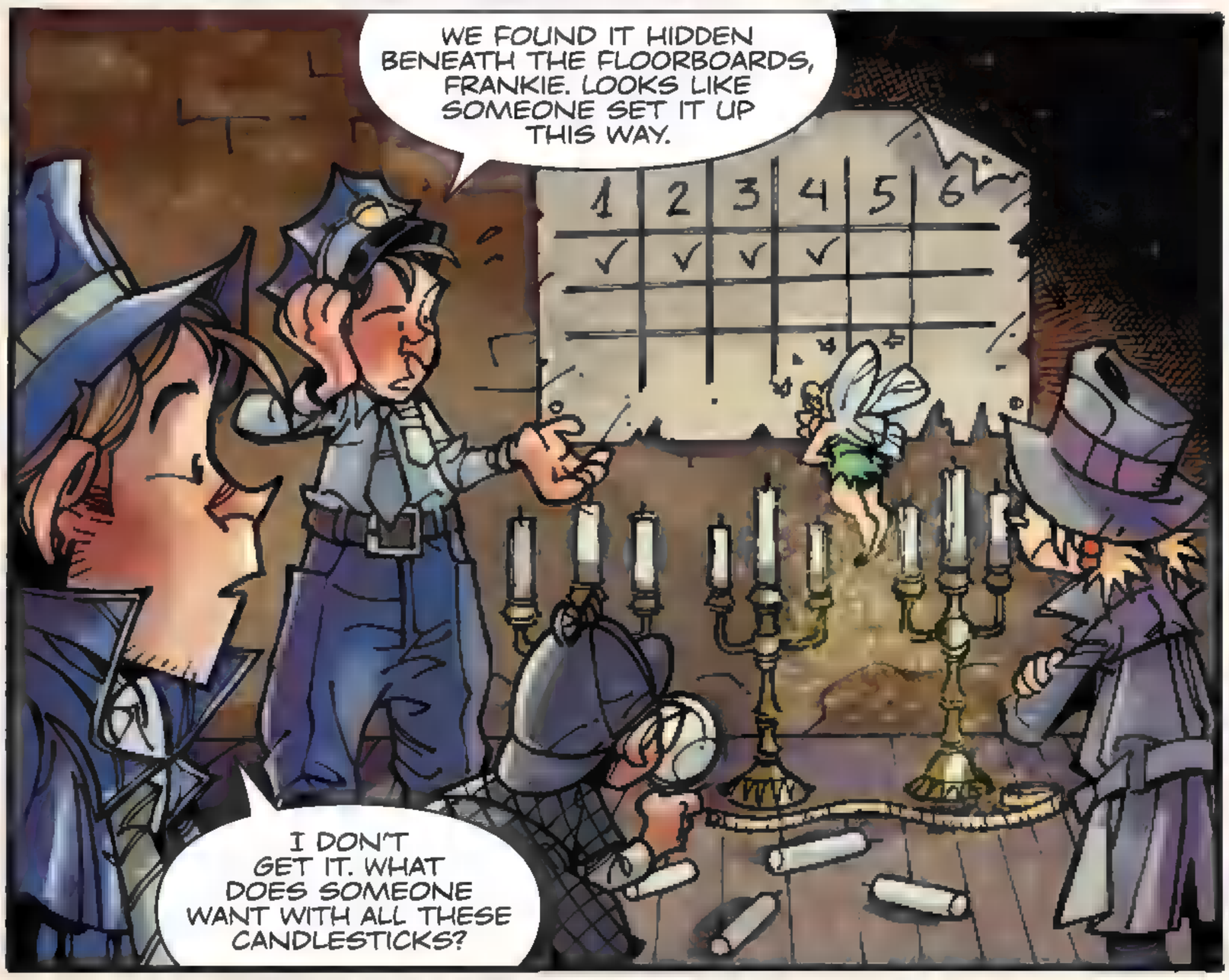

HERE'S ANOTHER CRAZY THING, FRANKIE: SEEMS YOUR GUY IS INTO COUNTING RHYMES.
ONE-TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE. SEVEN-EIGHT, THE GARDEN GATE.

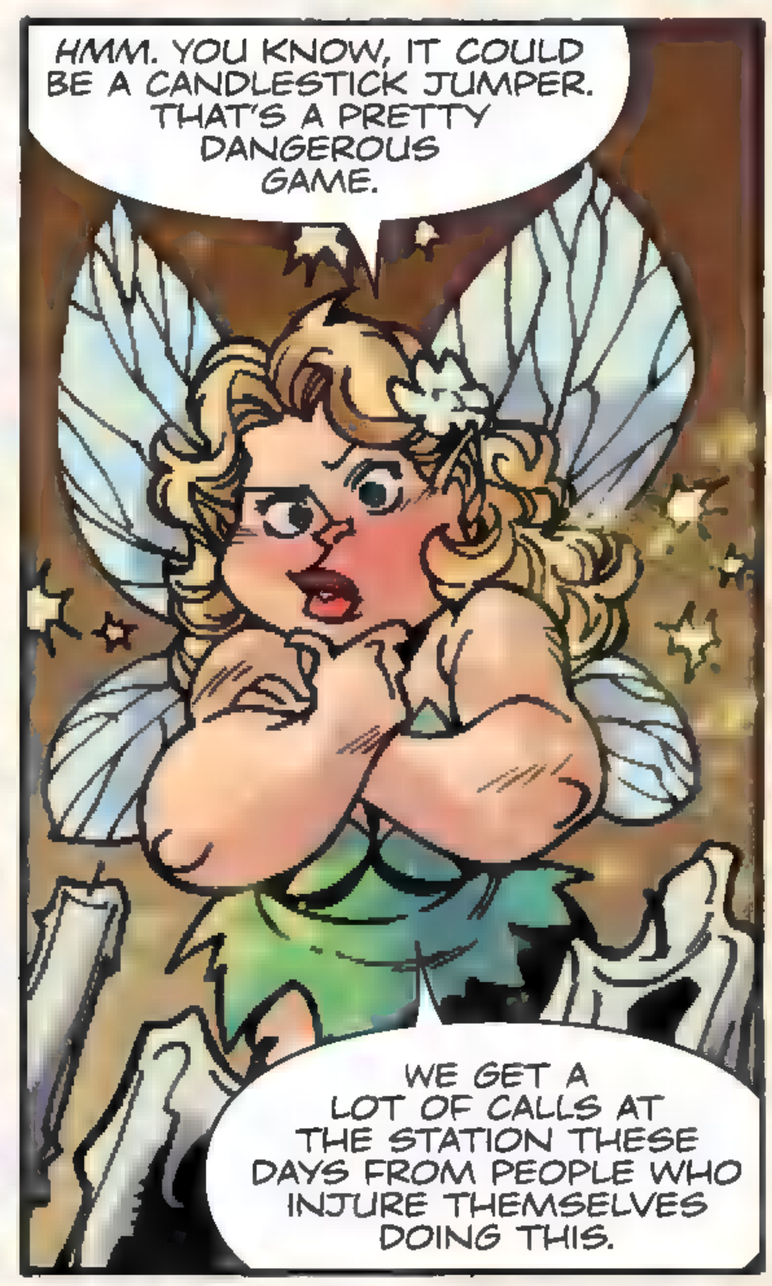
THE NUMBERS ARE OUT OF ORDER.
SOMETHING DOESN'T ADD UP.

HEY, FRANKIE! THIS GUY NEEDS A NEW DECK. ALL OF THE KNAVES ARE MISSING.

HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE PLAYING WITHOUT A FULL DECK.
MARLIE, YOU THINK MAYBE OUR PERP TARGETED ALL OF THE KNAVES AND WAS WORKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE SUITS?

IT'S POSSIBLE. WE KNOW HE PROBABLY KILLED THE KNAVE OF HEARTS--
DETECTIVES! OVER HERE!
2
3


WE FOUND IT HIDDEN BENEATH THE FLOORBOARDS, FRANKIE. LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE SET IT UP THIS WAY.
1 2 3 4 5 6
I DON'T GET IT. WHAT DOES SOMEONE WANT WITH ALL THESE CANDLESTICKS?


HMM. YOU KNOW, IT COULD BE A CANDLESTICK JUMPER. THAT'S A PRETTY DANGEROUS GAME.
WE GET A LOT OF CALLS AT THE STATION THESE DAYS FROM PEOPLE WHO INJURE THEMSELVES DOING THIS.

CANDLESTICKS... WAITAMINNIT...

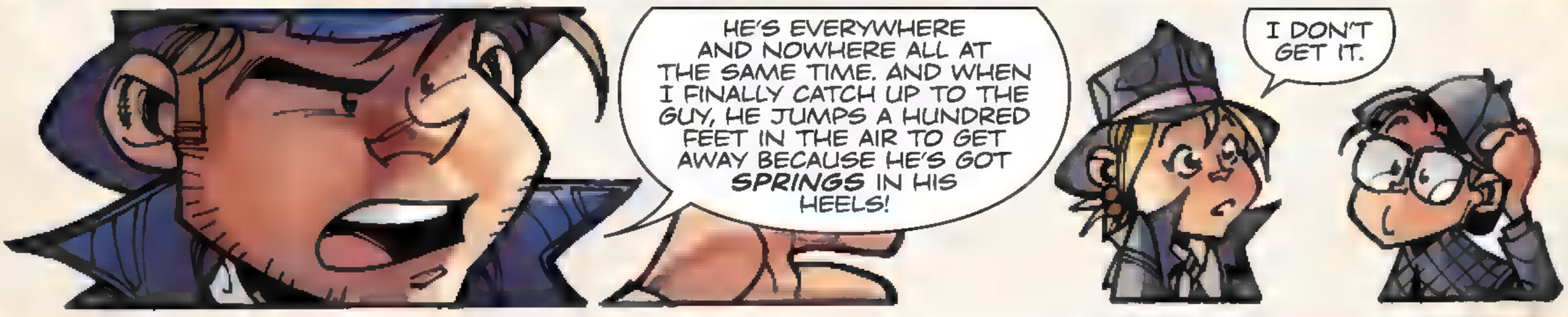
WAIT A MINUTE! THAT'S IT!

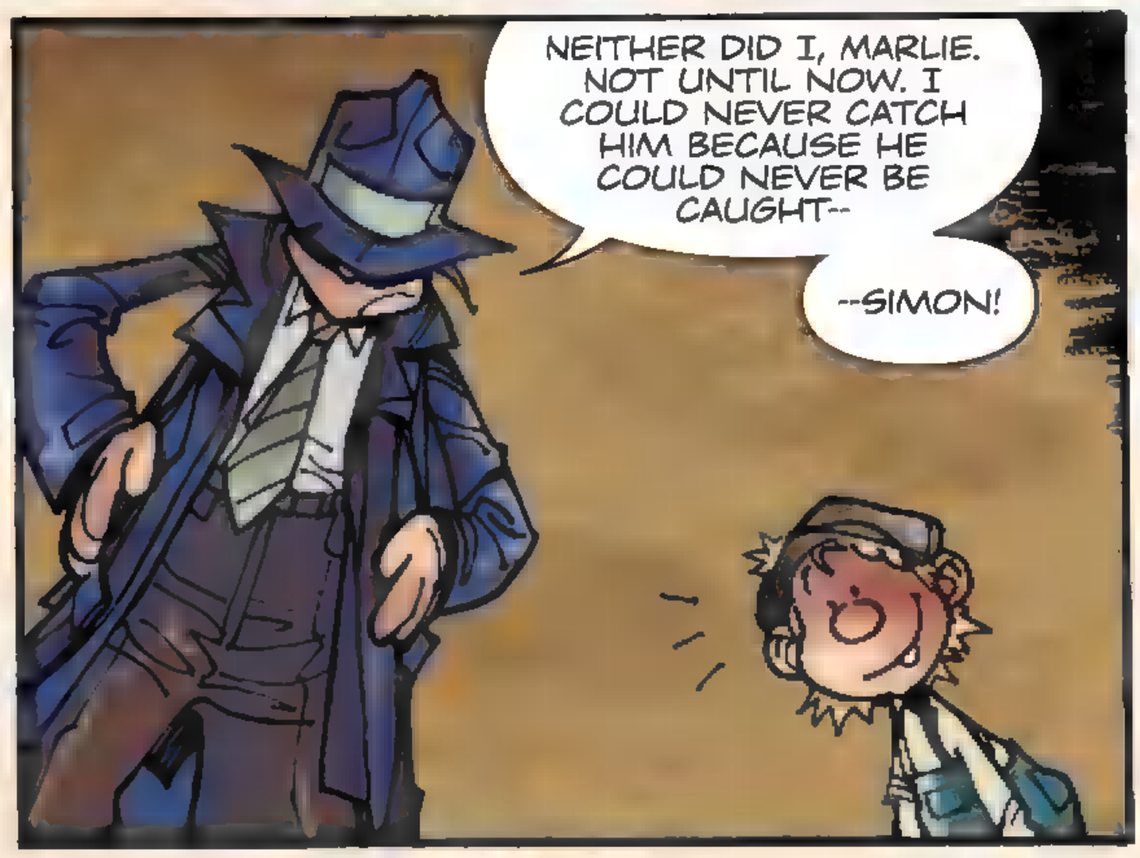
HEY, BERNIE! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BUCKET I FOUND THAT GOLDEN EGG IN AT THE KNAVE OF HEARTS CRIME SCENE? DID WE BOOK IT INTO EVIDENCE?
I THINK SO, FRANKIE. SURE.
14
13
12

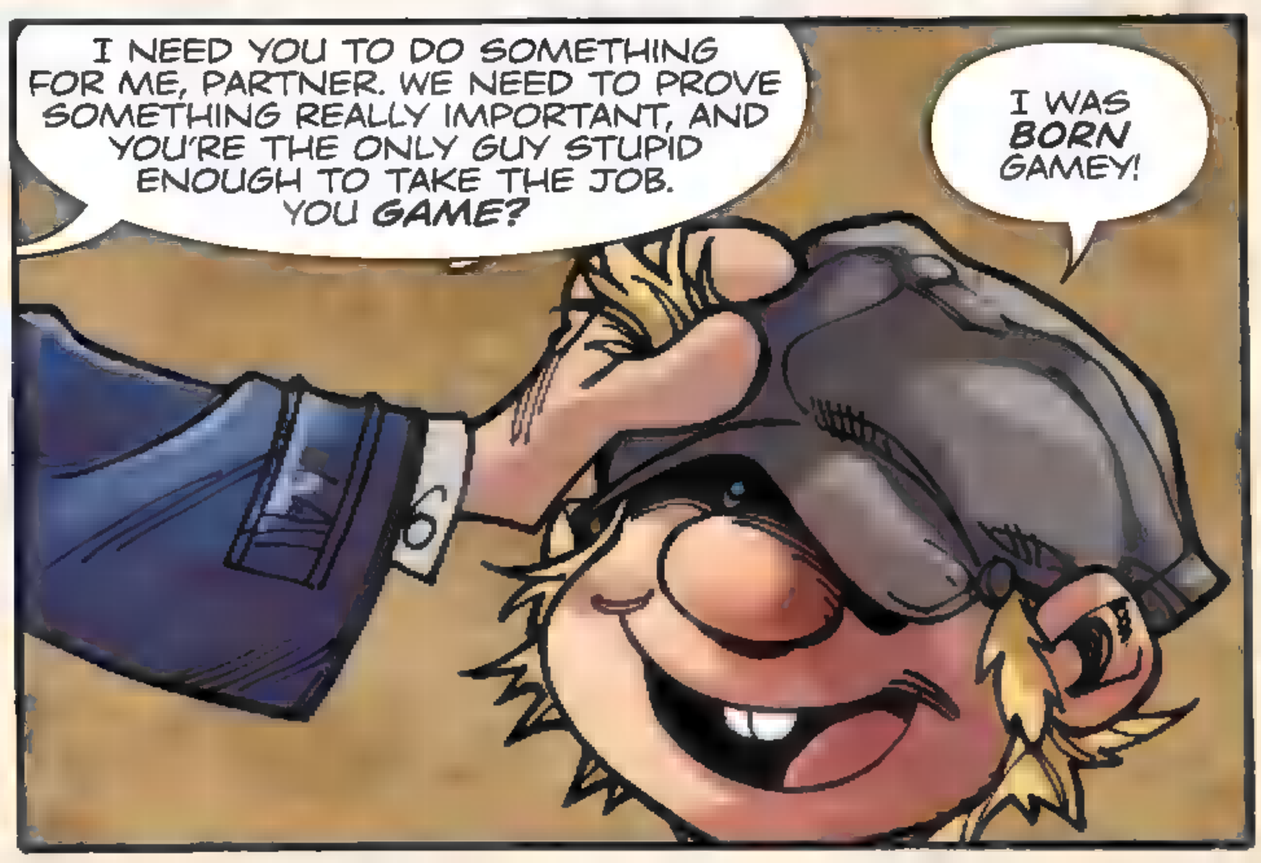
WHAT IS IT, FRANKIE? WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND?
WE NEED TO CHECK THAT BUCKET FOR PRINTS. I THINK I KNOW WHO IT BELONGS TO.

OH, GOD... I'M SUCH AN IDIOT! IT WAS RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF US ALL ALONG!
WHAT WAS? FRANKIE, YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE--

DON'T YOU GET IT, WATS? THIS GUY CAN FLIT BETWEEN REALMS IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE--THAT'S WHY I COULD NEVER CATCH HIM!
HECK, SNOW WHITE'S DWARVES HAVE A THOUSAND TUNNELS RUNNING ALL THE WAY UNDER FABLEWOOD. WHO KNOWS WHERE THEY ALL LEAD?


HE'S EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE ALL AT THE SAME TIME. AND WHEN I FINALLY CATCH UP TO THE GUY, HE JUMPS A HUNDRED FEET IN THE AIR TO GET AWAY BECAUSE HE'S GOT SPRINGS IN HIS HEELS!
I DON'T GET IT.

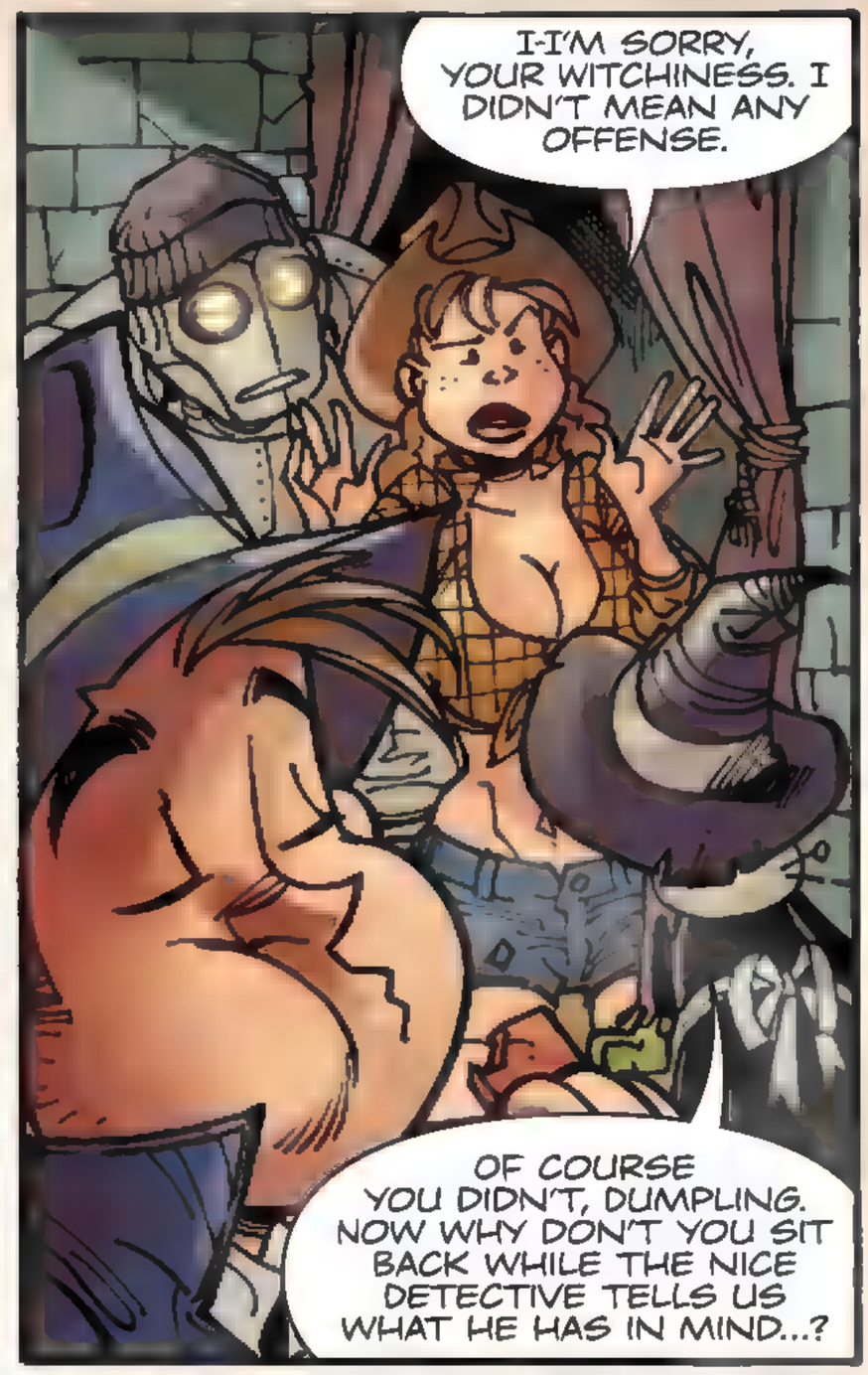

NEITHER DID I, MARLIE. NOT UNTIL NOW. I COULD NEVER CATCH HIM BECAUSE HE COULD NEVER BE CAUGHT--
--SIMON!


I NEED YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME, PARTNER. WE NEED TO PROVE SOMETHING REALLY IMPORTANT, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY GUY STUPID ENOUGH TO TAKE THE JOB. YOU GAME?
I WAS BORN GAMEY!

ONE DAY LATER
TERRITORY OF OZ
CASTLE OF THE NORTHSIDE WITCH
SO. THIS IS NICE. WOULD YOU LIKE MORE TEA, DEARIE?
I'M FINE FOR THE MOMENT, THANK YOU, MA'AM.
WELL, YOU CAN NEVER HAVE ENOUGH TEA AND BISCUITS, THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS SAY. ESPECIALLY BISCUITS. THESE YOUNG ONES COULD DO WITH A LITTLE FATTENING UP.
NOW WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, DETECTIVE MACK?
WELL, AS YOU KNOW, YOUR WITCHINESS, THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF TROUBLE IN THE CITY LATELY--A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR EVERYONE CONCERNED.
OOH, YES. NASTY BUSINESS. BUT I FAIL TO SEE WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH ME, DETECTIVE?
LET'S JUST SAY THE CITY OF RIMES WOULD LIKE TO SEE EVERYONE MAKE NICE AGAIN.
PLAY BALL WITH US, AND WE'LL PLAY BALL WITH YOU, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT?

WE CAN'T LISTEN TO THIS ONE! HE'S A COP! I DON'T TRUST HIM!

YOU REALLY MUST WATCH THAT TONGUE OF YOURS, DOTTY. SOMEBODY MIGHT CUT IT OFF, IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.

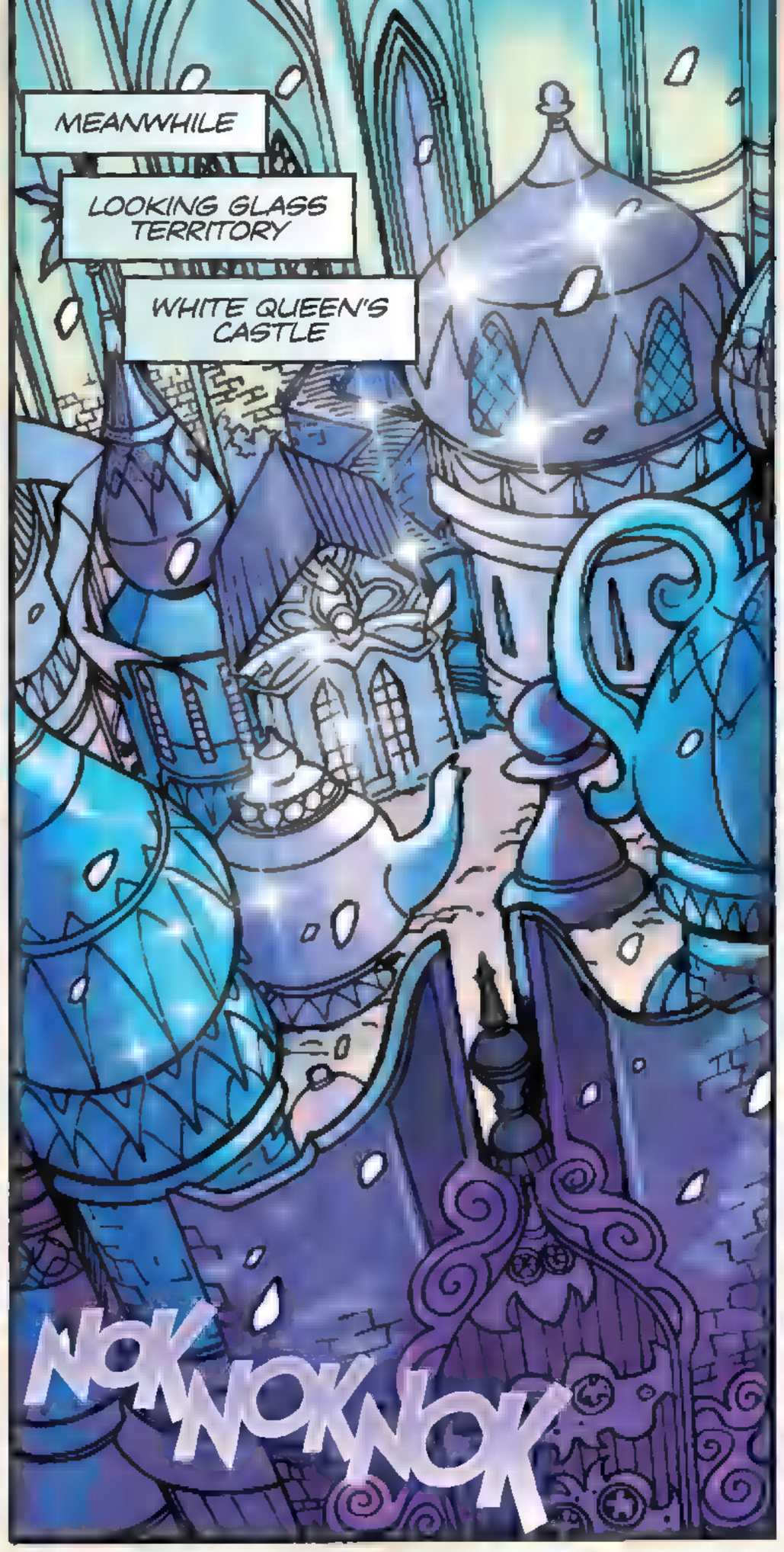

I-I'M SORRY, YOUR WITCHINESS. I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OFFENSE.
OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T, DUMPLING. NOW WHY DON'T YOU SIT BACK WHILE THE NICE DETECTIVE TELLS US WHAT HE HAS IN MIND...?

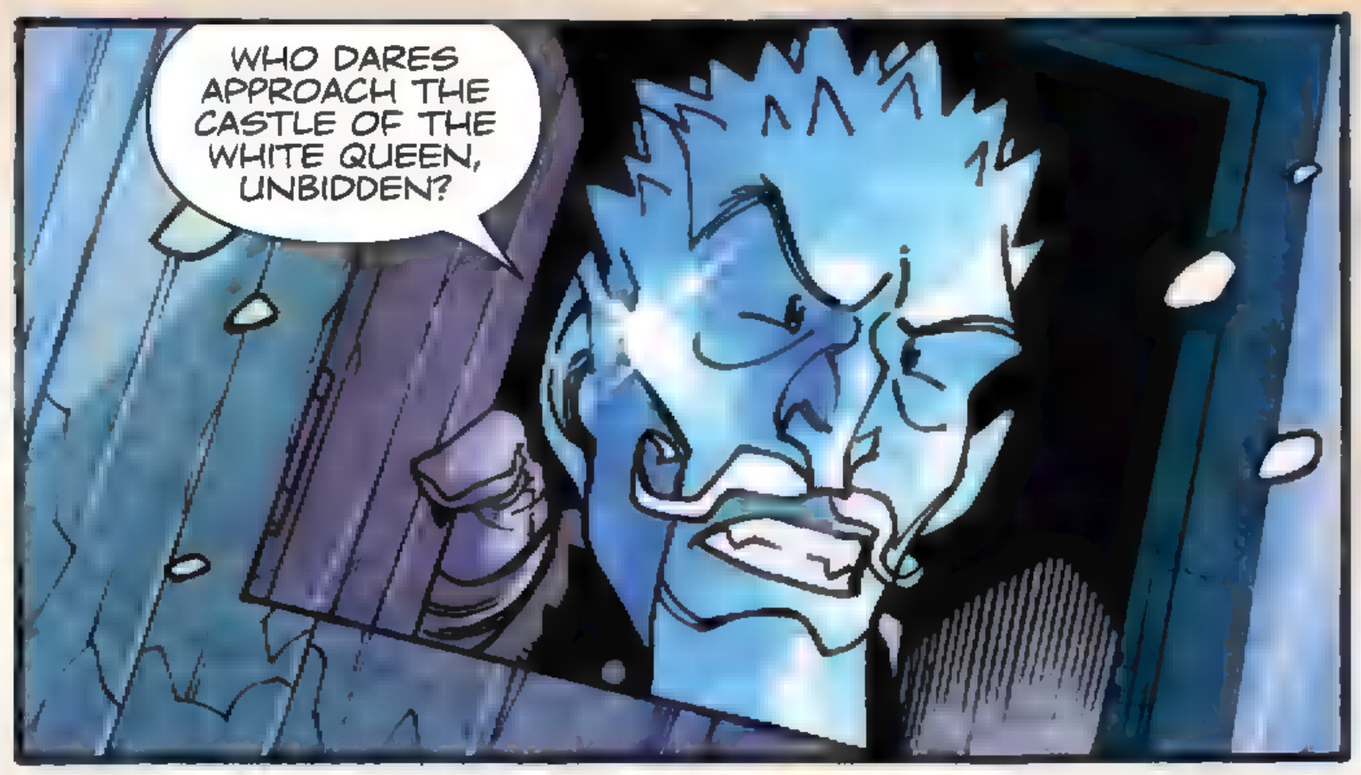
FULL AMNESTY FOR THE INCIDENT WITH THE DIAMOND PALACE. WE REESTABLISH THE ORIGINAL TERRITORIES. YOU GET THE EMERALD MINES BACK.
I DO BELIEVE I CAN GET THOSE ALL BY MYSELF, DEARIE--

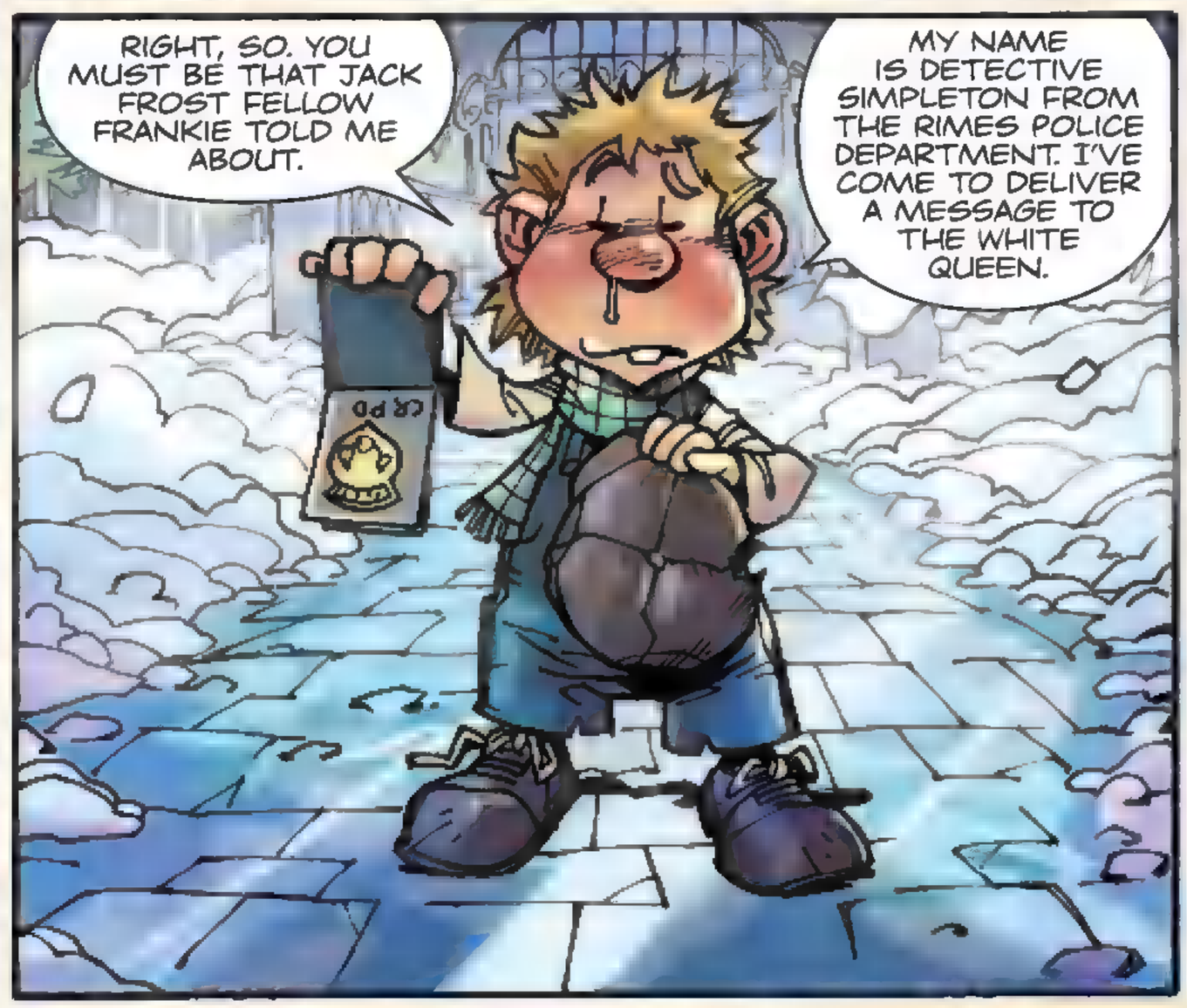
NOT FOR LONG. NOT WITHOUT THE MADONNAS BREAKING DOWN YOUR DOORS EVERY TIME THEY GO SPOILING FOR A FIGHT. ALL THIS TROUBLE; ALL FOR THE PROMISE OF AN EGG THAT NOBODY CAN DESCRIBE.

AND YOU'RE SURE YOU CAN BRING ABOUT THIS DEAL... DETECTIVE?
SURE AS I'LL EVER BE, MA'AM.

LET'S HOPE SO, DEARIE.
FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR NOGGIN, OF COURSE.

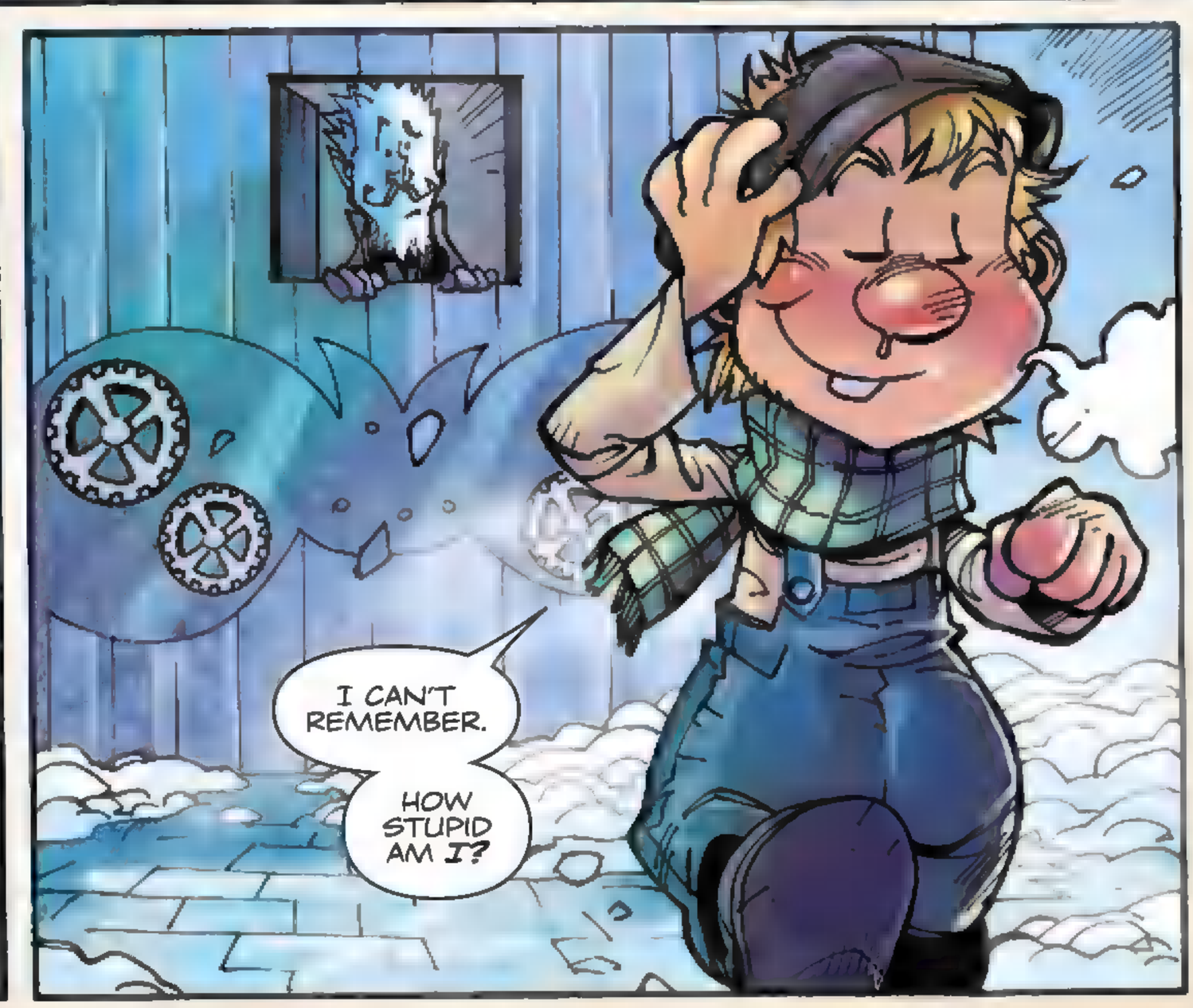

MEANWHILE
LOOKING GLASS TERRITORY
WHITE QUEEN'S CASTLE
NOK NOK NOK


WHO DARES APPROACH THE CASTLE OF THE WHITE QUEEN, UNBIDDEN?

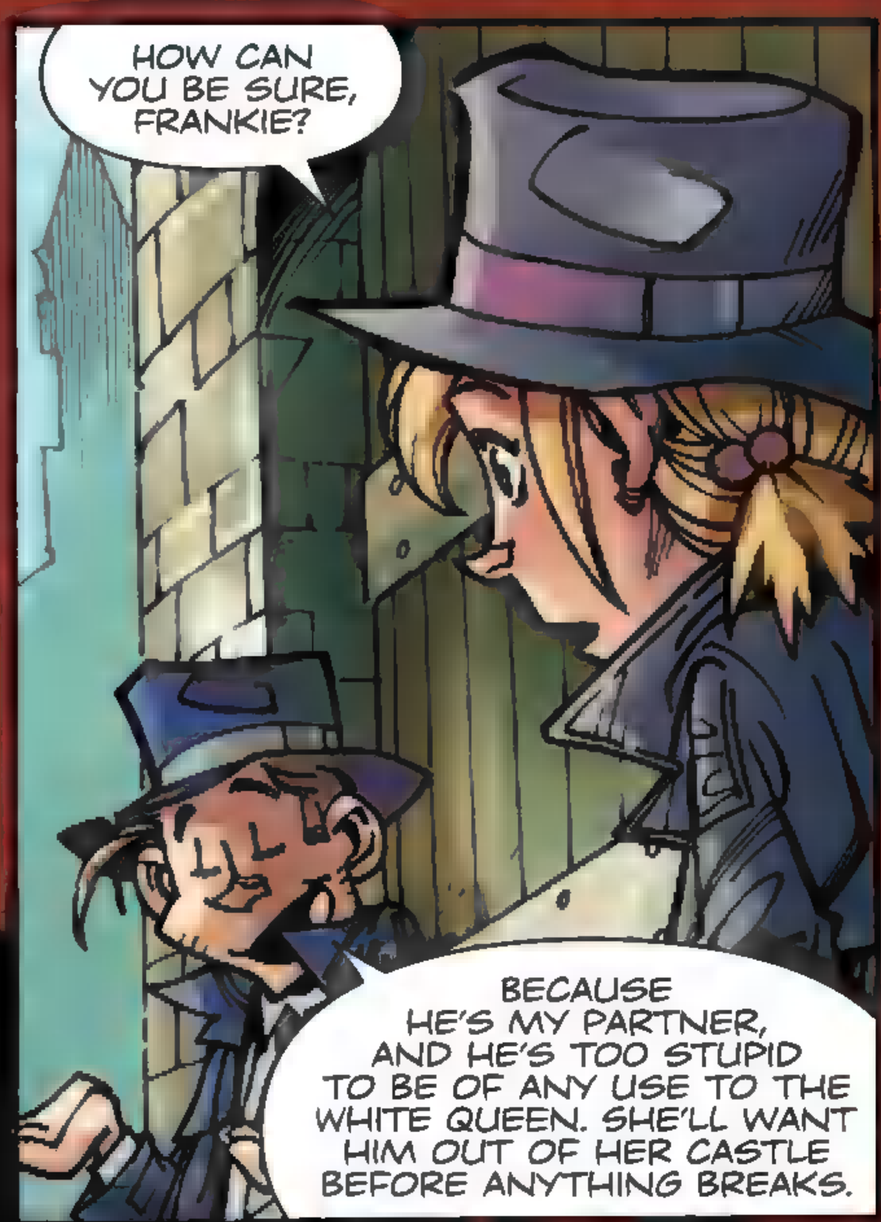

RIGHT, SO. YOU MUST BE THAT JACK FROST FELLOW FRANKIE TOLD ME ABOUT.
MY NAME IS DETECTIVE SIMPLETON FROM THE RIMES POLICE DEPARTMENT. I'VE COME TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO THE WHITE QUEEN.

IMPOSSIBLE! NO ONE DELIVERS A MESSAGE TO THE WHITE QUEEN WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT, AND THOSE WHO HAVE AN APPOINTMENT SELDOM LIVE--
--WAIT A MOMENT... ARE YOU CONNECTED TO DETECTIVE FRANKIE MACK?
YUP. THIS IS FOR YOU.

ONLY AN IDIOT OF EPIC PROPORTIONS WOULD DARE COME BY THE WHITE QUEEN'S CASTLE UNANNOUNCED.
WHO SENT YOU ON THIS FOOL'S ERRAND?

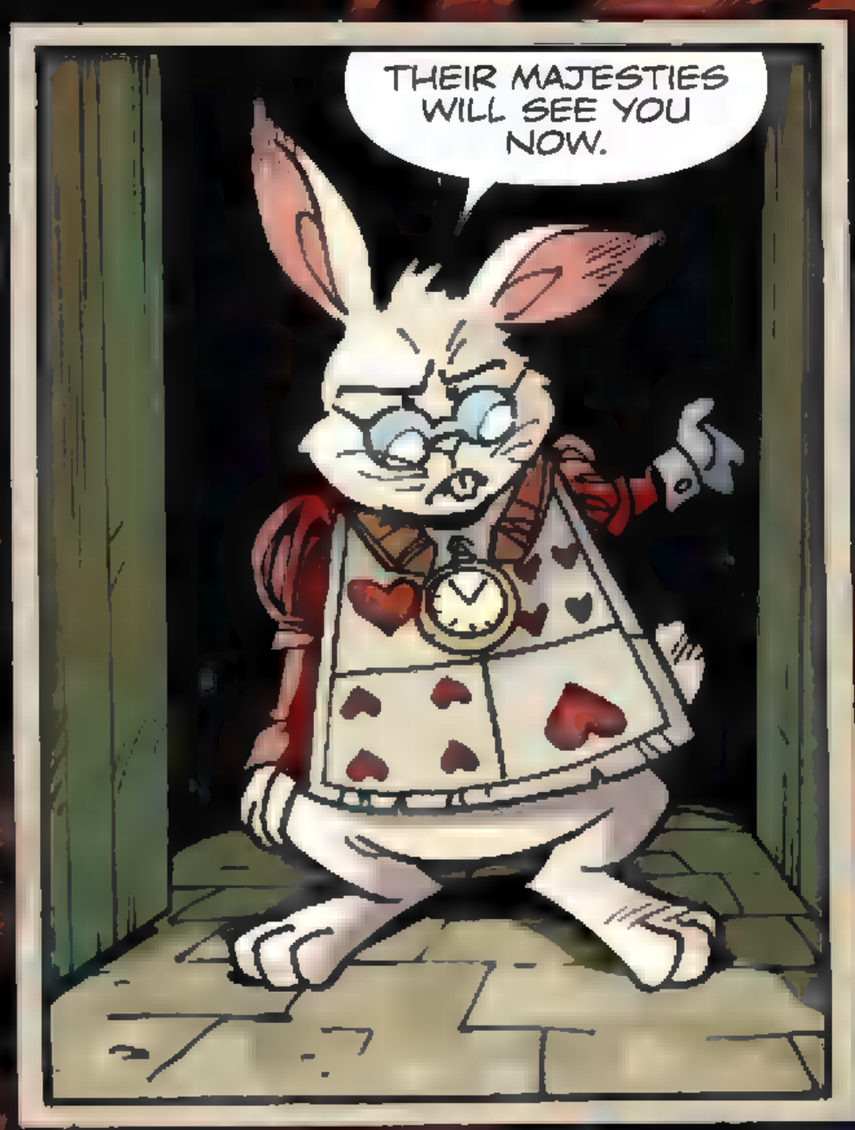

I CAN'T REMEMBER.
HOW STUPID AM *I*?

LATER
WONDERLAND TERRITORY
QUEEN OF HEARTS' CASTLE
I WONDER HOW SIMON'S DOING.
HE'LL BE OKAY.

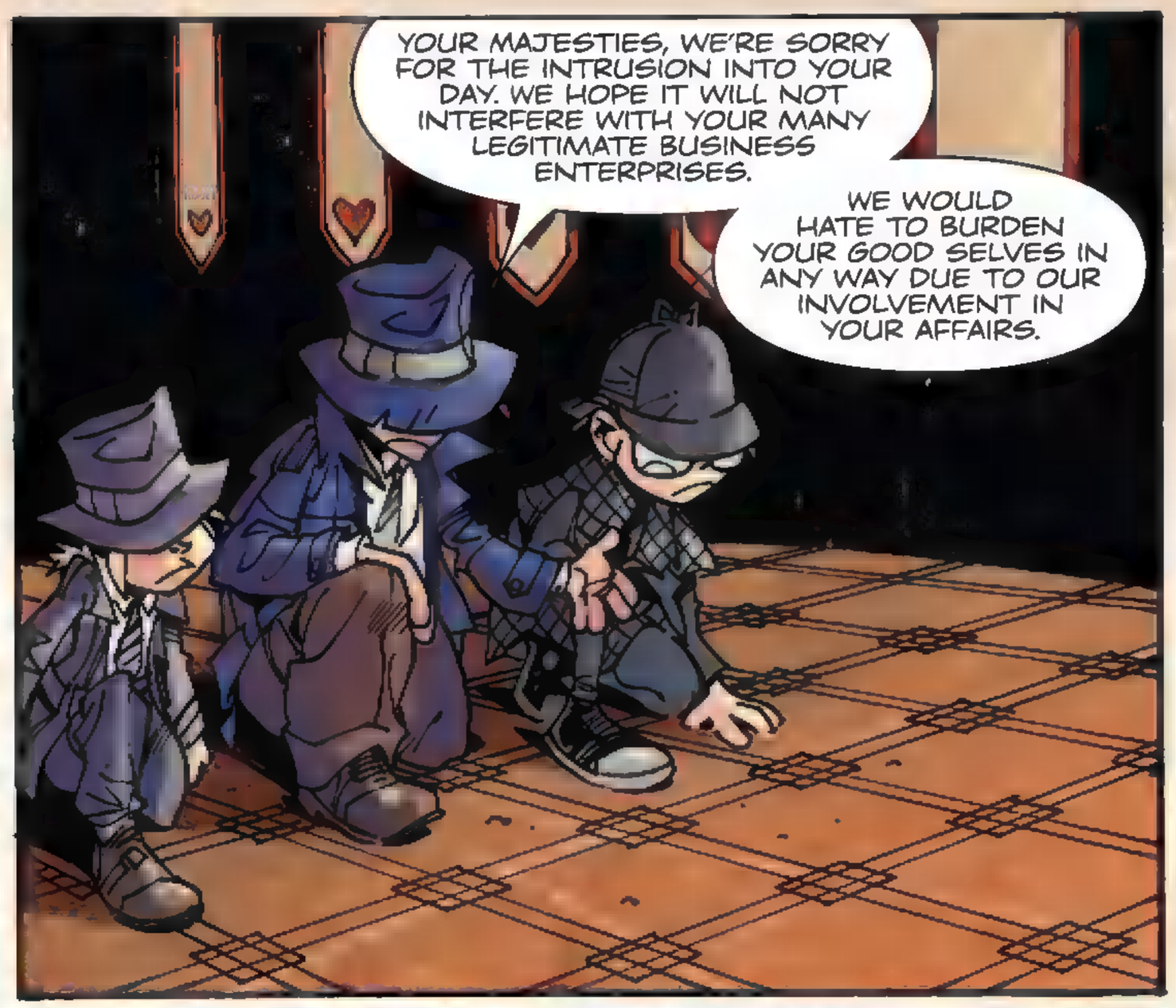

HOW CAN YOU BE SURE, FRANKIE?
BECAUSE HE'S MY PARTNER, AND HE'S TOO STUPID TO BE OF ANY USE TO THE WHITE QUEEN. SHE'LL WANT HIM OUT OF HER CASTLE BEFORE ANYTHING BREAKS.

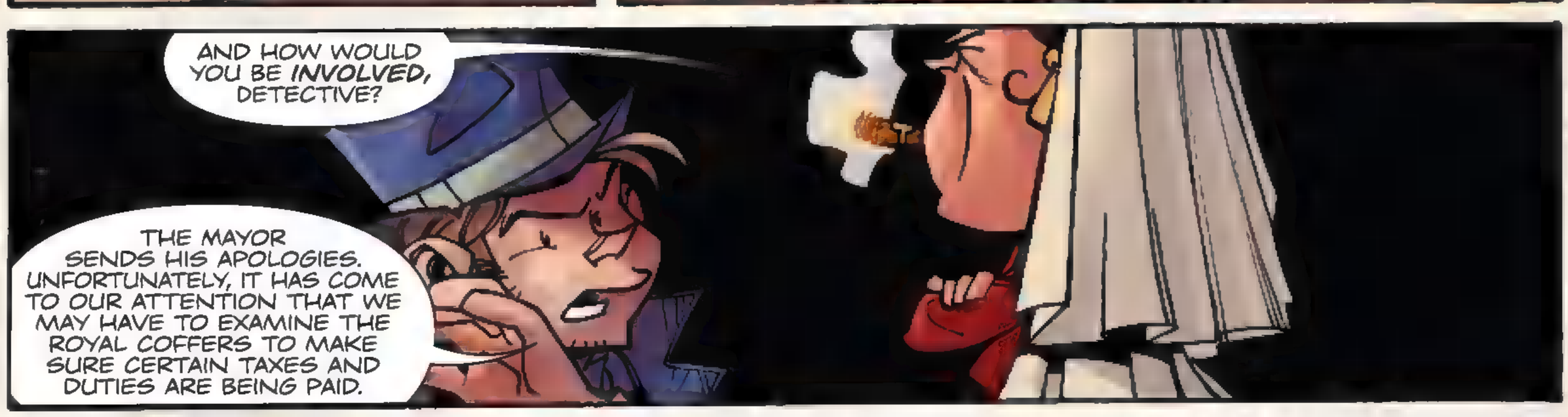
I DON'T LIKE THIS, FRANKIE. YOU DON'T JUST WALK UP TO ANY QUEEN'S FRONT DOOR AND ASK TO BE SEEN--
--AND YET I'VE DONE IT TWICE IN ONE WEEK. NO GOING BACK NOW, KIDS.

KREEE


THEIR MAJESTIES WILL SEE YOU NOW.

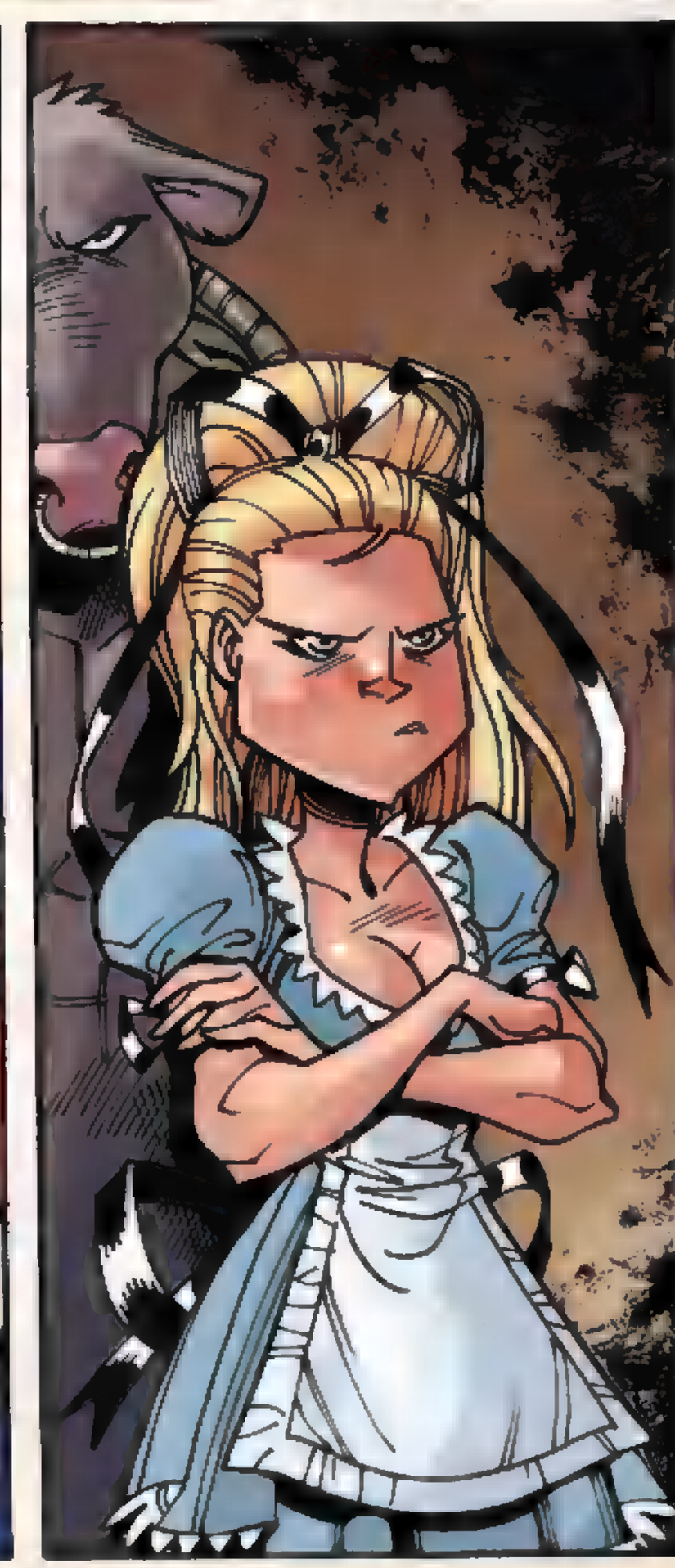
IT'S NOT OFTEN WE ARE VISITED BY THE AUTHORITIES.
MY SISTERS AND I HOPE YOUR INQUIRIES WILL BE SHORT AND SWEET, FOR THE SAKE OF EVERYONE HERE.

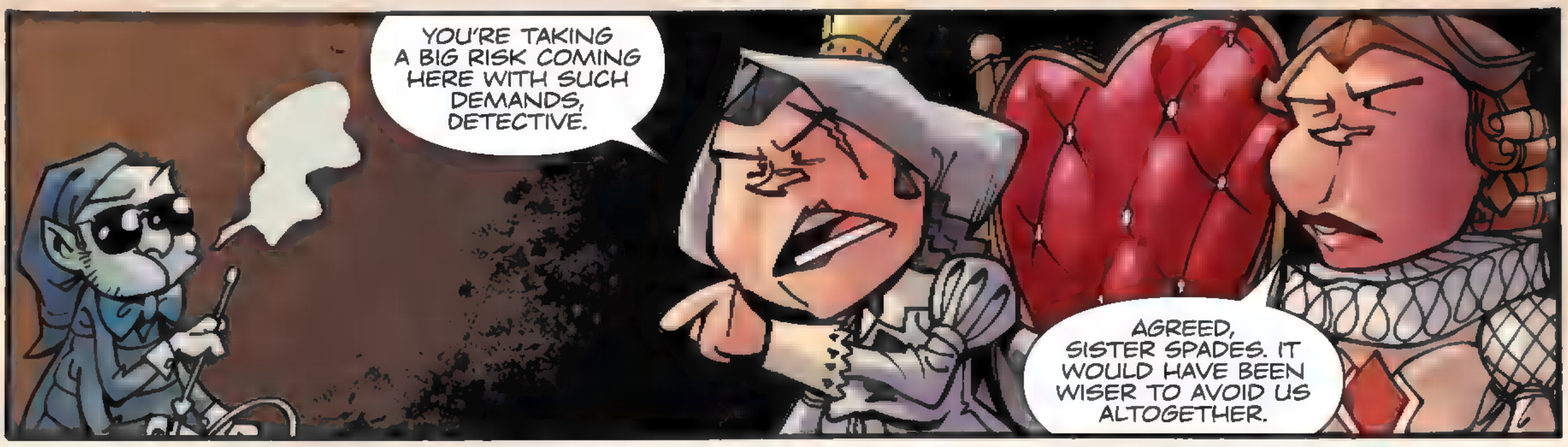

YOUR MAJESTIES, WE'RE SORRY FOR THE INTRUSION INTO YOUR DAY. WE HOPE IT WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH YOUR MANY LEGITIMATE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.
WE WOULD HATE TO BURDEN YOUR GOOD SELVES IN ANY WAY DUE TO OUR INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR AFFAIRS.


AND HOW WOULD YOU BE *INVOLVED*, DETECTIVE?
THE MAYOR SENDS HIS APOLOGIES. UNFORTUNATELY, IT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT WE MAY HAVE TO EXAMINE THE ROYAL COFFERS TO MAKE SURE CERTAIN TAXES AND DUTIES ARE BEING PAID.

AND WHY WOULD THE MAYOR INTERFERE WITH OUR LEGITIMATE BUSINESS DEALINGS IN THIS WAY?
HE HAS NO CHOICE. UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE ALL BEEN LED ASTRAY BY AN OUTSIDER--A MAN KNOWN TO SOME OF YOU HAS BEEN DANGLING THE PROMISE OF A CERTAIN EGG IN EXCHANGE FOR ILLICIT SERVICES.

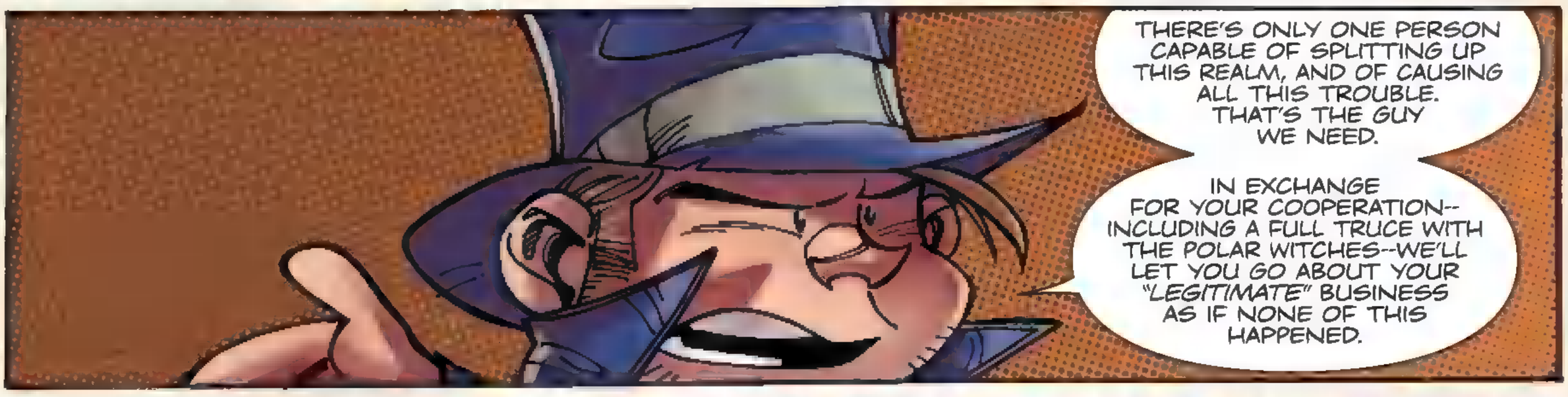
THE MAYOR WISHES ONLY TO PROTECT YOUR MAJESTIES FROM THIS INDIVIDUAL. HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO INVOLVE YOU IN THIS SORDID AFFAIR.
OUR EXAMINATION OF YOUR RECORDS COULD EASILY BE OVERLOOKED, IN RETURN FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

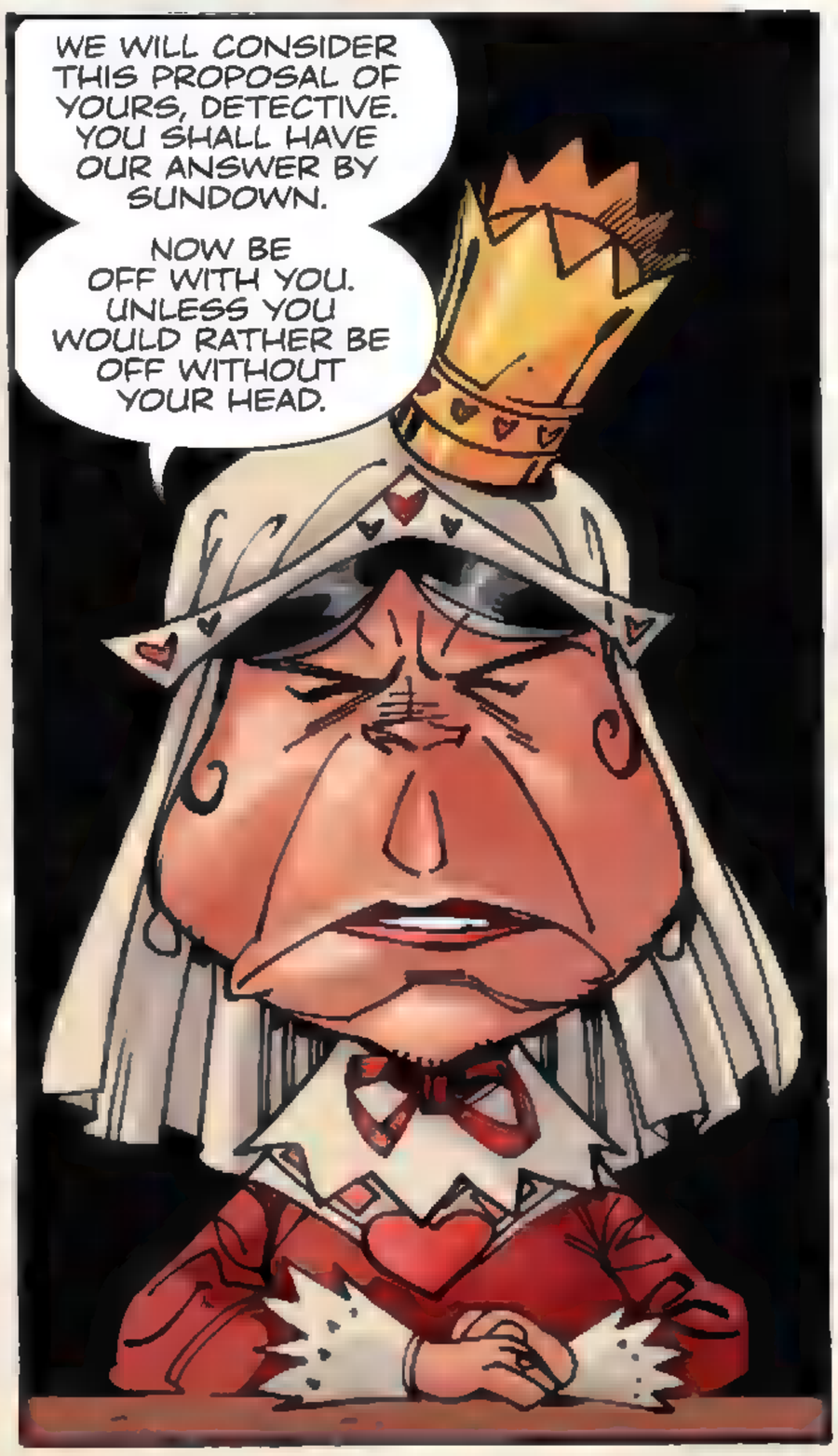



YOU'RE TAKING A BIG RISK COMING HERE WITH SUCH DEMANDS, DETECTIVE.
AGREED, SISTER SPADES. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER TO AVOID US ALTOGETHER.

I UNDERSTAND, YOUR MAJESTIES. UNFORTUNATELY, DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE MEASURES.
GOTTA LAY ALL MY CARDS ON THE TABLE FOR THIS ONE.
HOW DARE YOU--!

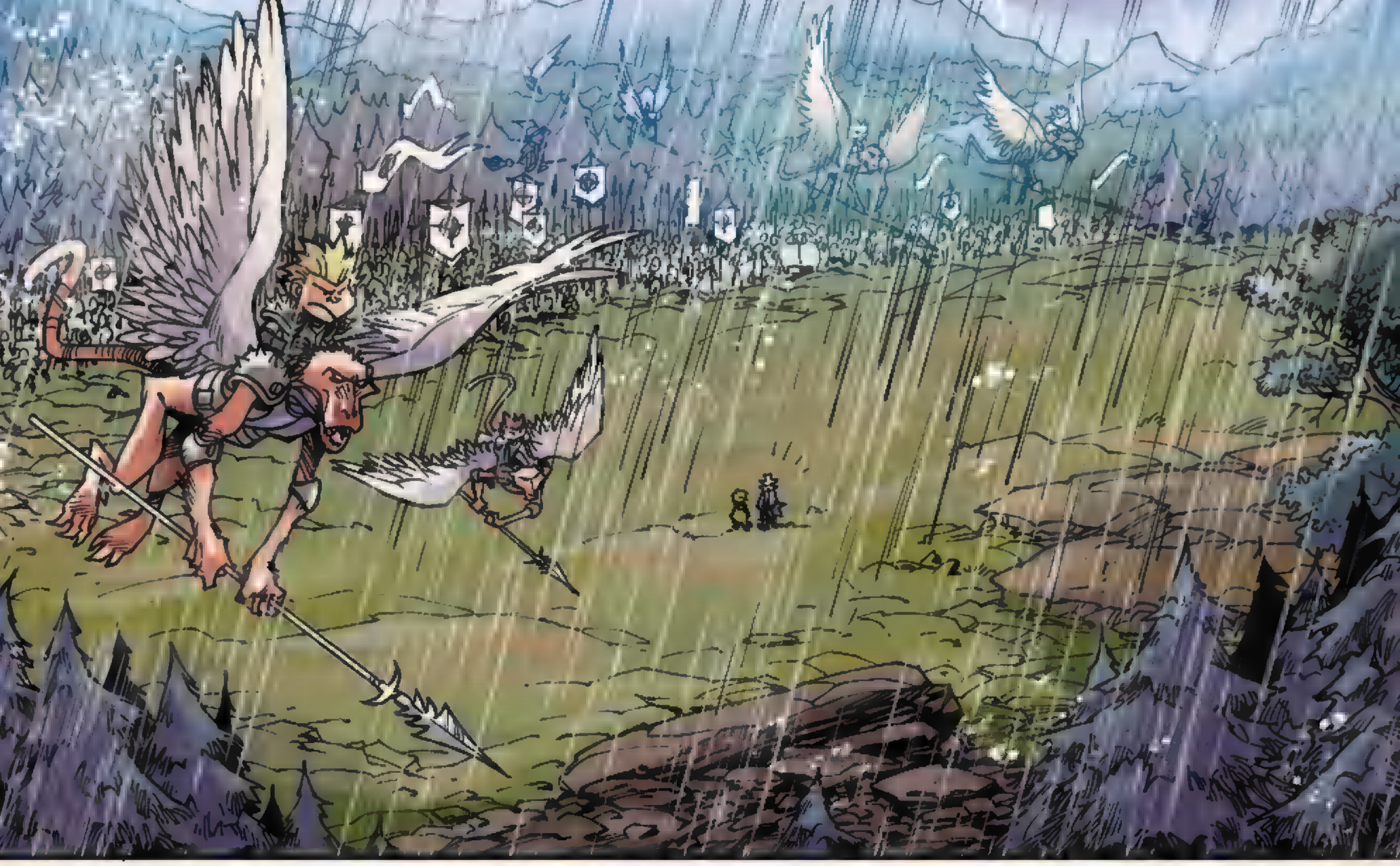
SILENCE, WENCH! YOU WILL SPEAK WHEN INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, DETECTIVE FRANKIE MACK. AND MAKE IT VERY--VERY--GOOD INDEED.

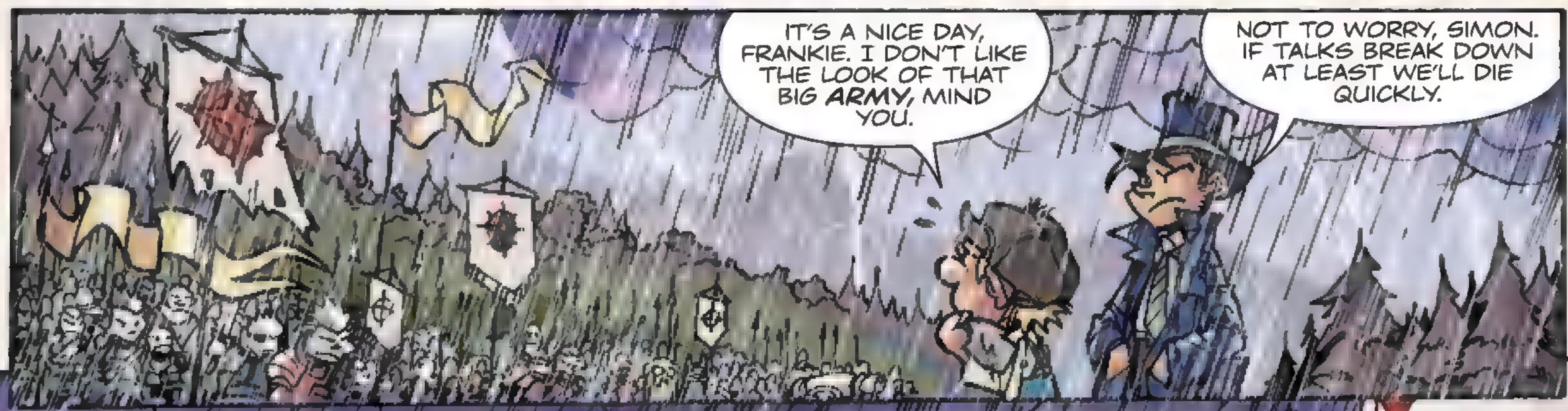

THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON CAPABLE OF SPLITTING UP THIS REALM, AND OF CAUSING ALL THIS TROUBLE. THAT'S THE GUY WE NEED.
IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR COOPERATION--INCLUDING A FULL TRUCE WITH THE POLAR WITCHES--WE'LL LET YOU GO ABOUT YOUR "LEGITIMATE" BUSINESS AS IF NONE OF THIS HAPPENED.

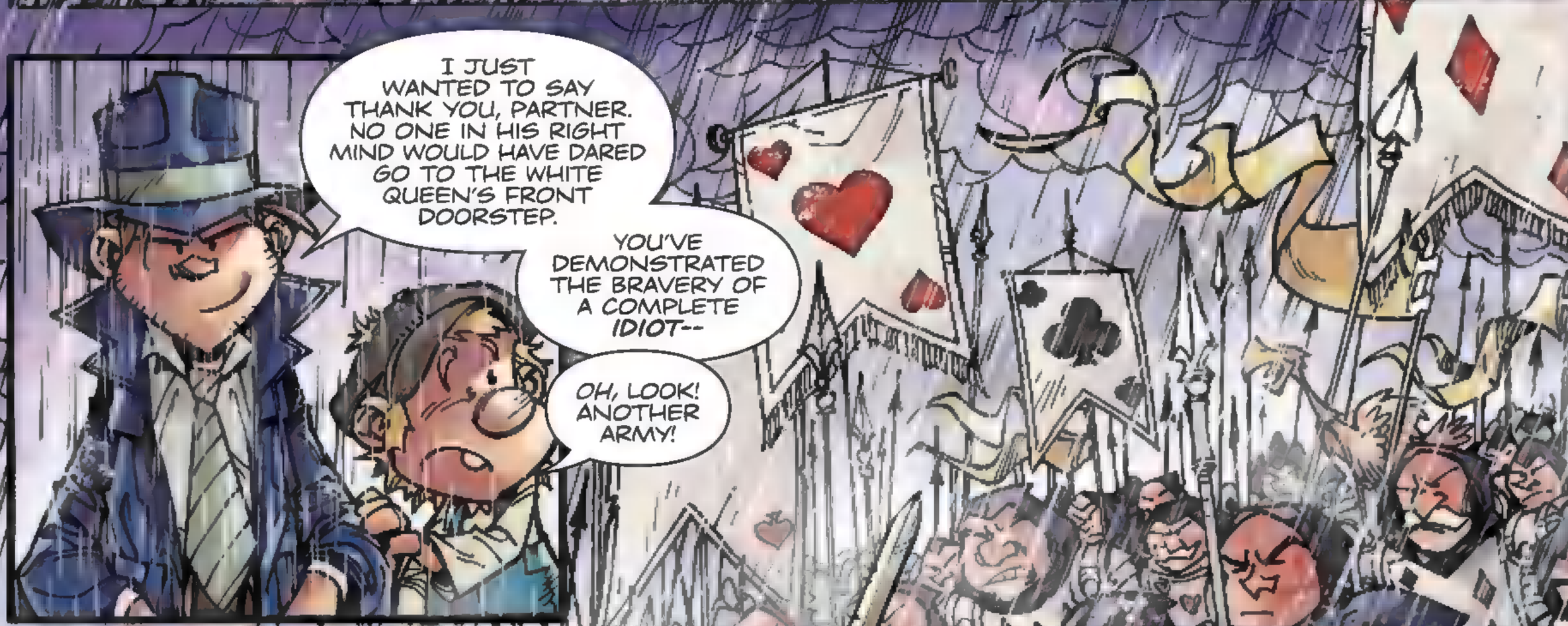

WE WILL CONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL OF YOURS, DETECTIVE. YOU SHALL HAVE OUR ANSWER BY SUNDOWN.
NOW BE OFF WITH YOU. UNLESS YOU WOULD RATHER BE OFF WITHOUT YOUR HEAD.

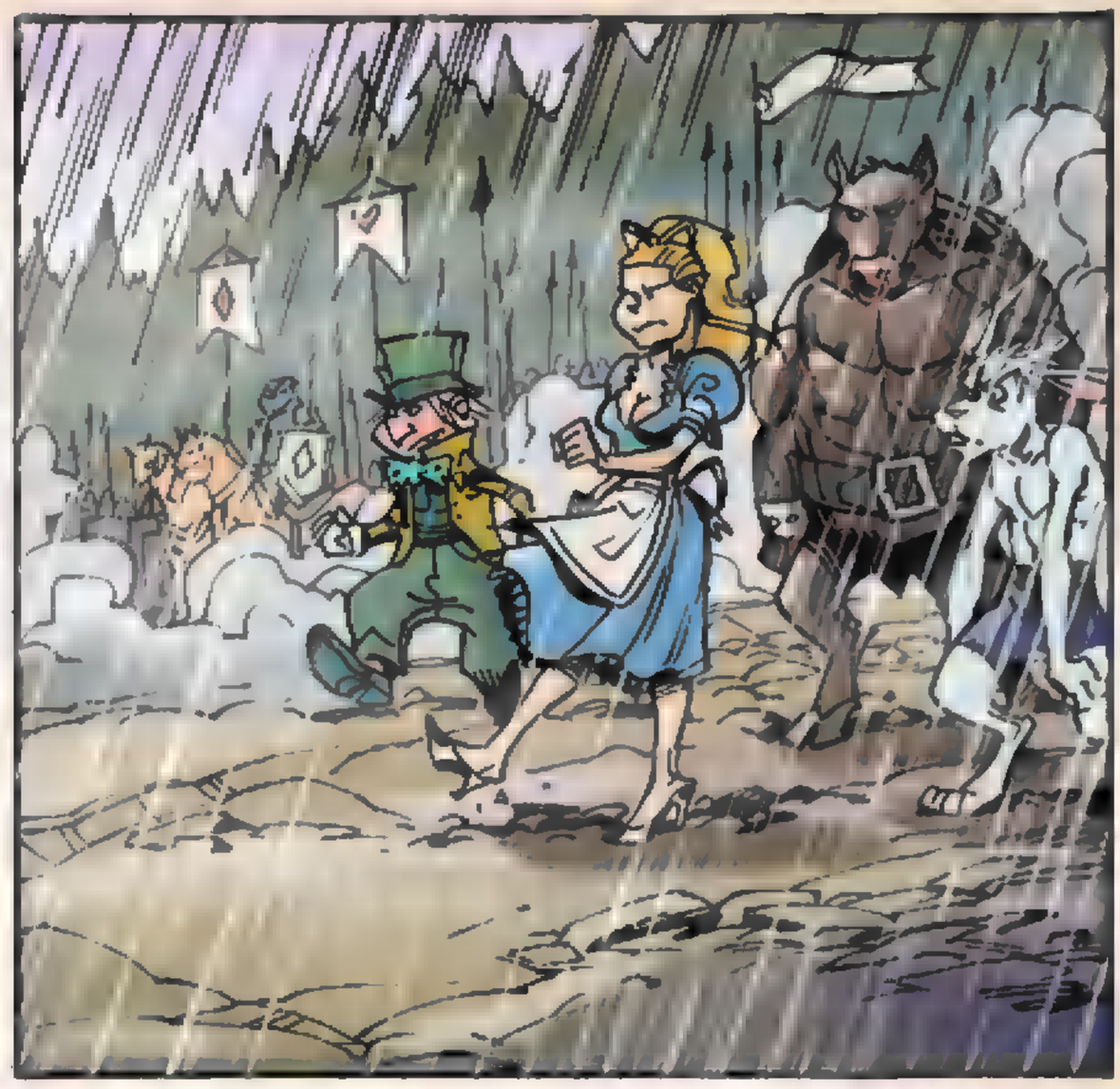
GETTING THE WITCHES AND THE QUEENS TOGETHER TO SIGN A TRUCE?
ISN'T THAT A BIT RISKY, FRANKIE?

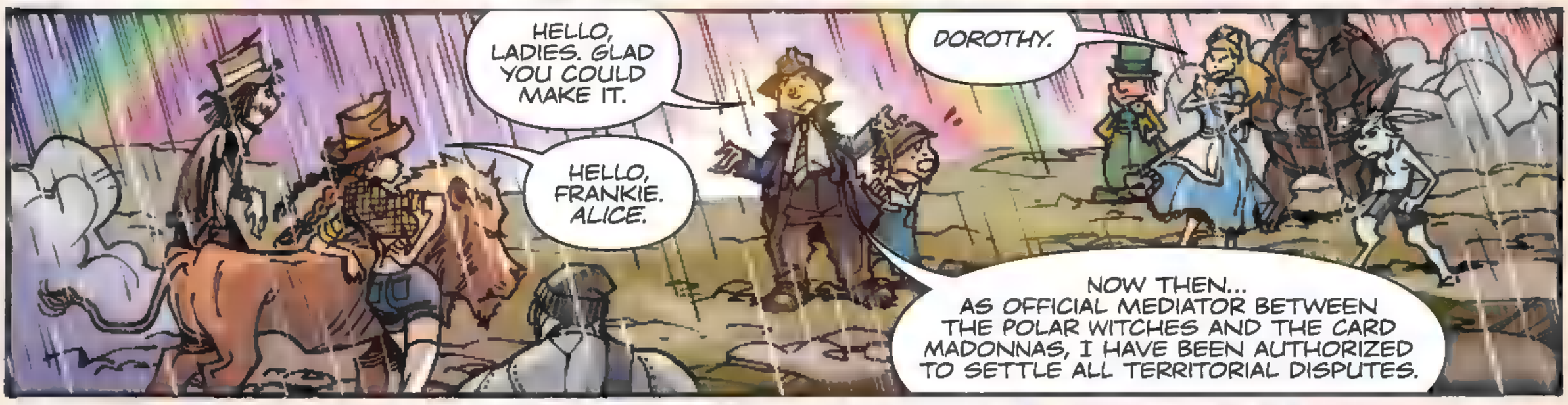
THAT'S WHAT I'M COUNTING ON.

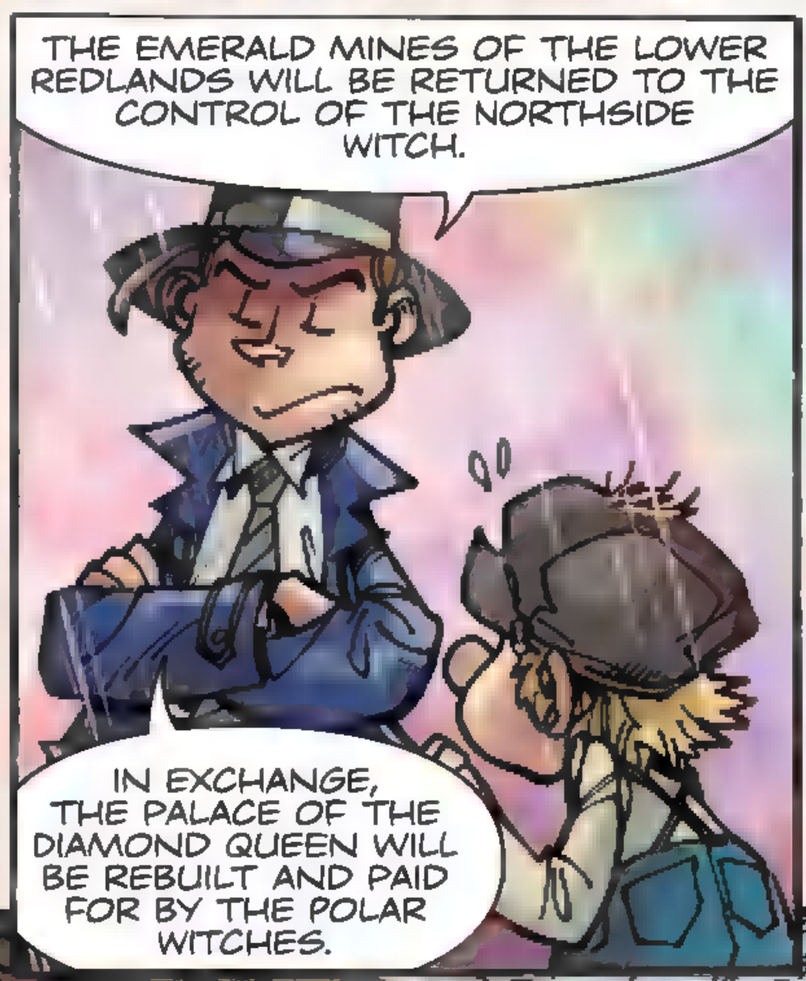


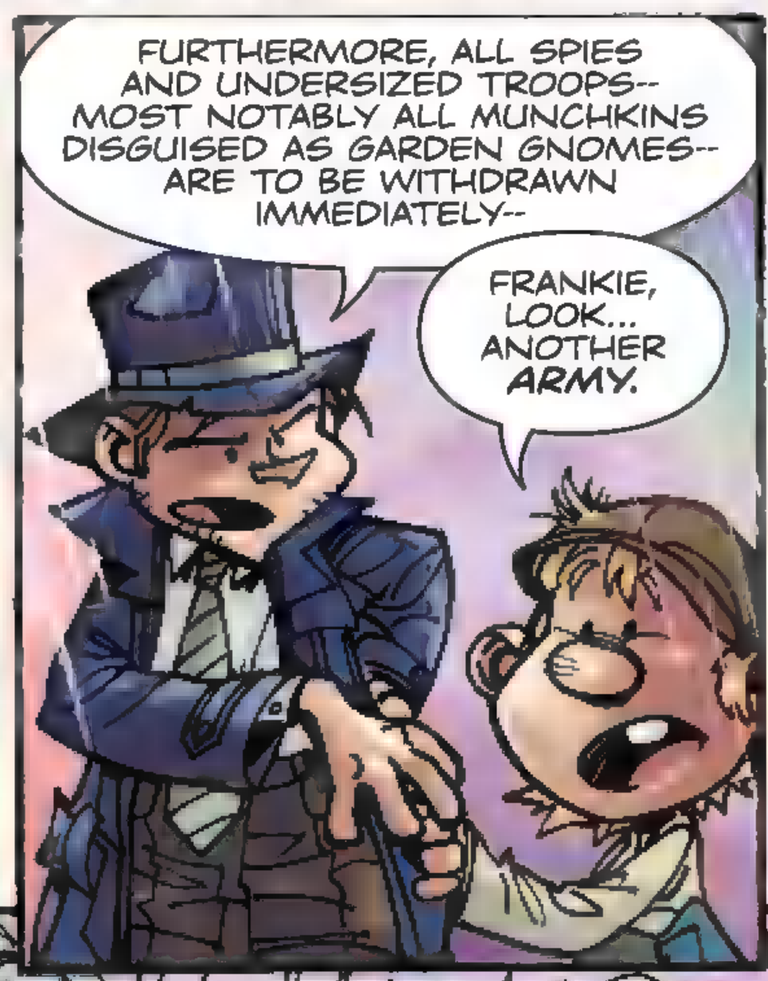

IT'S A NICE DAY, FRANKIE. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT BIG ARMY, MIND YOU.
NOT TO WORRY, SIMON. IF TALKS BREAK DOWN AT LEAST WE'LL DIE QUICKLY.

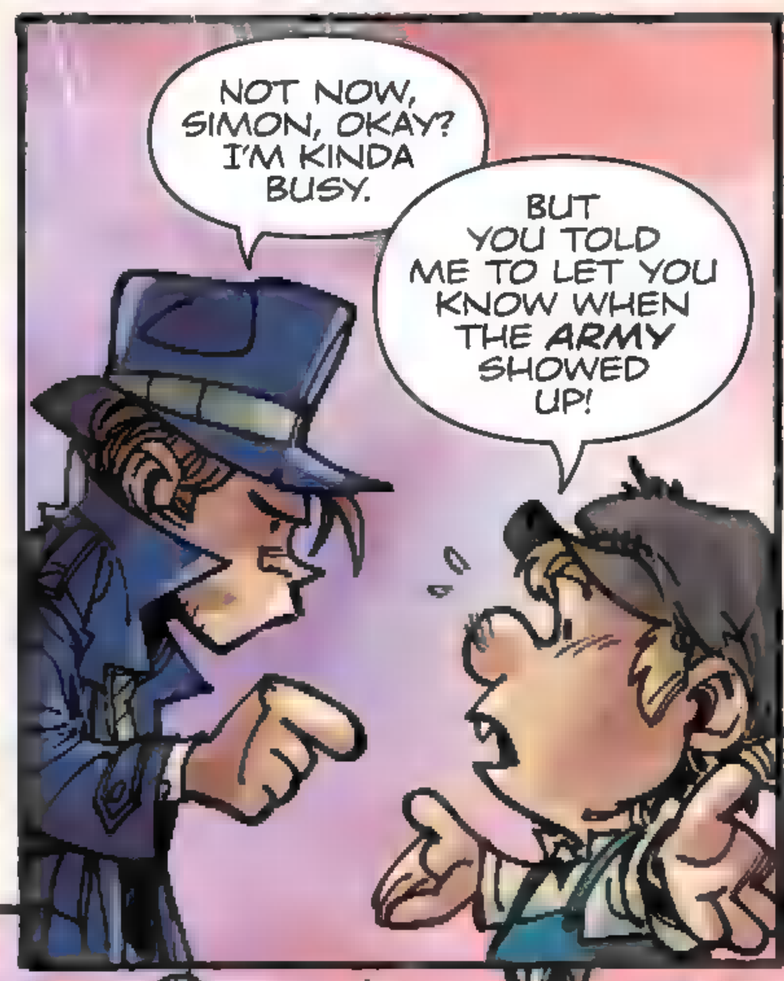

I JUST WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU, PARTNER. NO ONE IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD HAVE DARED GO TO THE WHITE QUEEN'S FRONT DOORSTEP.
YOU'VE DEMONSTRATED THE BRAVERY OF A COMPLETE IDIOT--
OH, LOOK! ANOTHER ARMY!

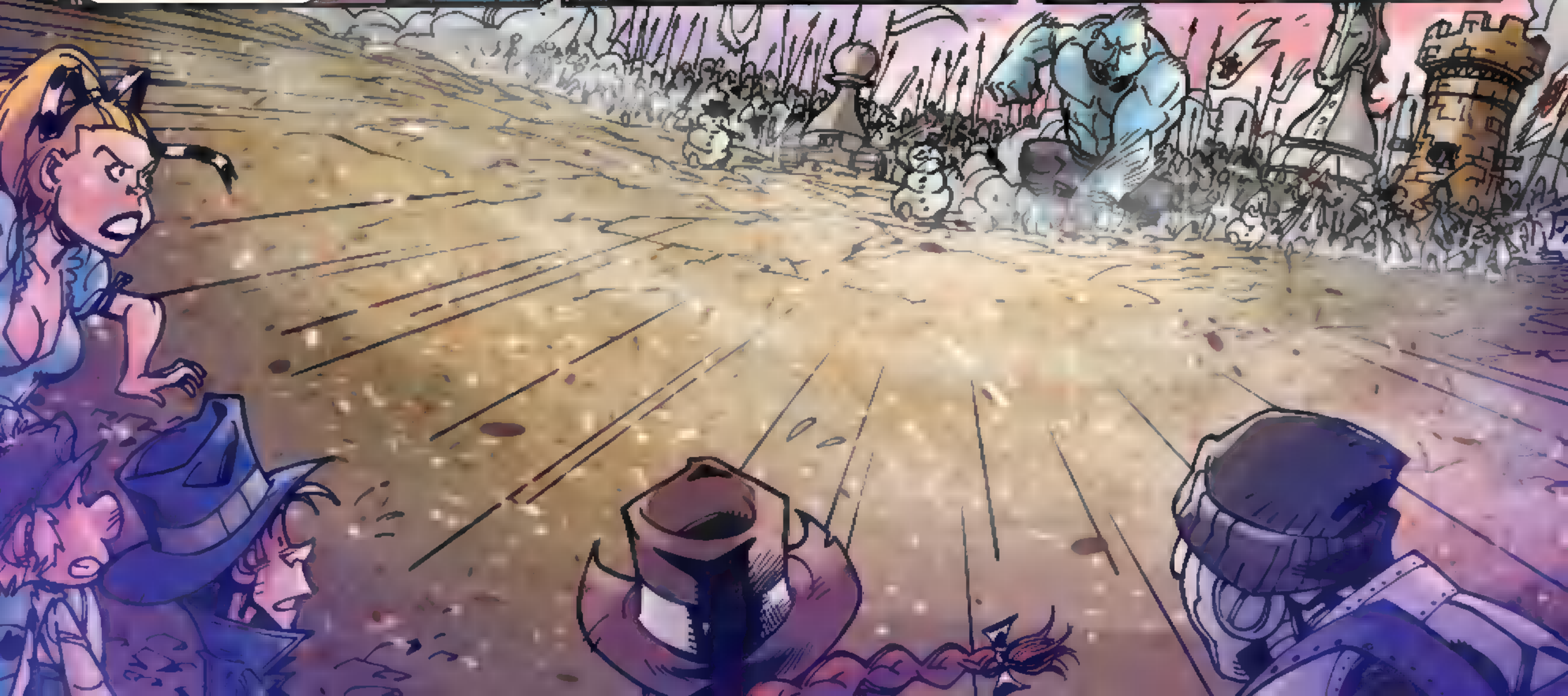



HELLO, LADIES. GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.
HELLO, FRANKIE. ALICE.
DOROTHY.
NOW THEN... AS OFFICIAL MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE POLAR WITCHES AND THE CARD MADONNAS, I HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO SETTLE ALL TERRITORIAL DISPUTES.

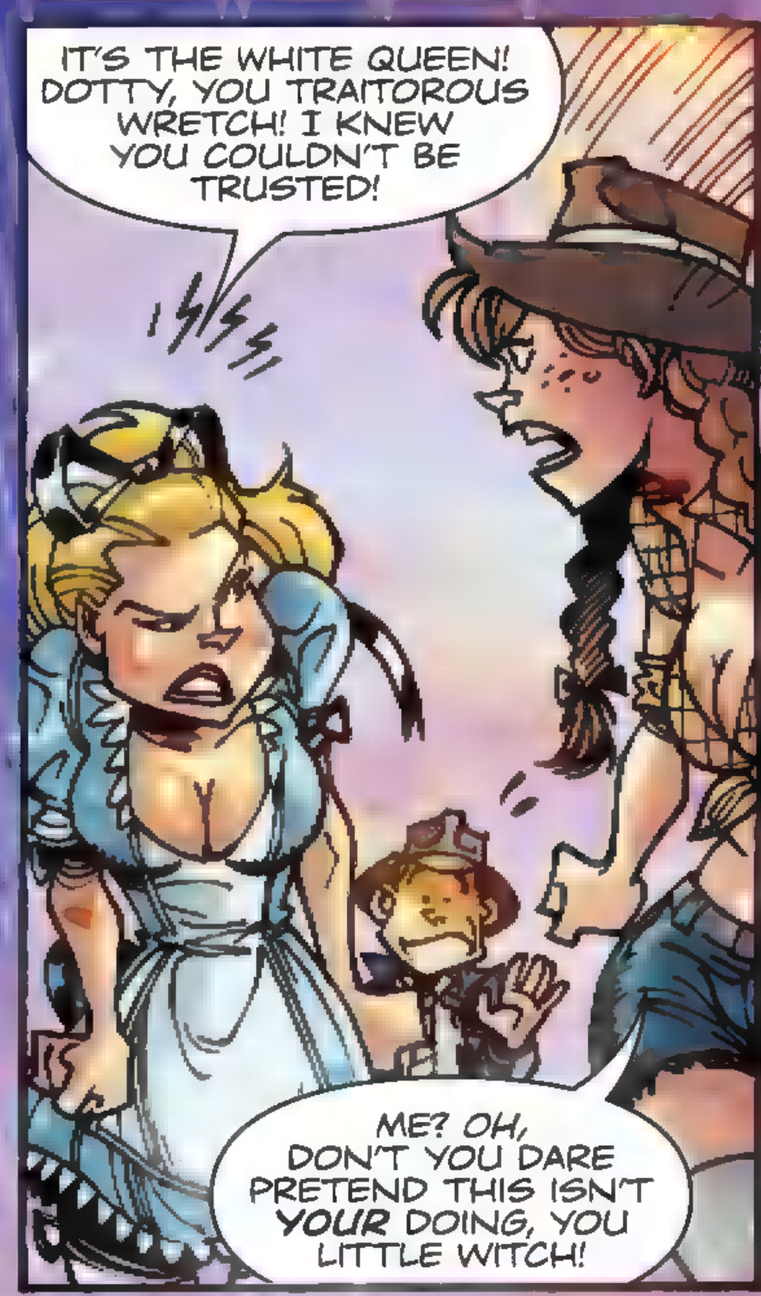

THE EMERALD MINES OF THE LOWER REDLANDS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE CONTROL OF THE NORTHSIDE WITCH.
IN EXCHANGE, THE PALACE OF THE DIAMOND QUEEN WILL BE REBUILT AND PAID FOR BY THE POLAR WITCHES.

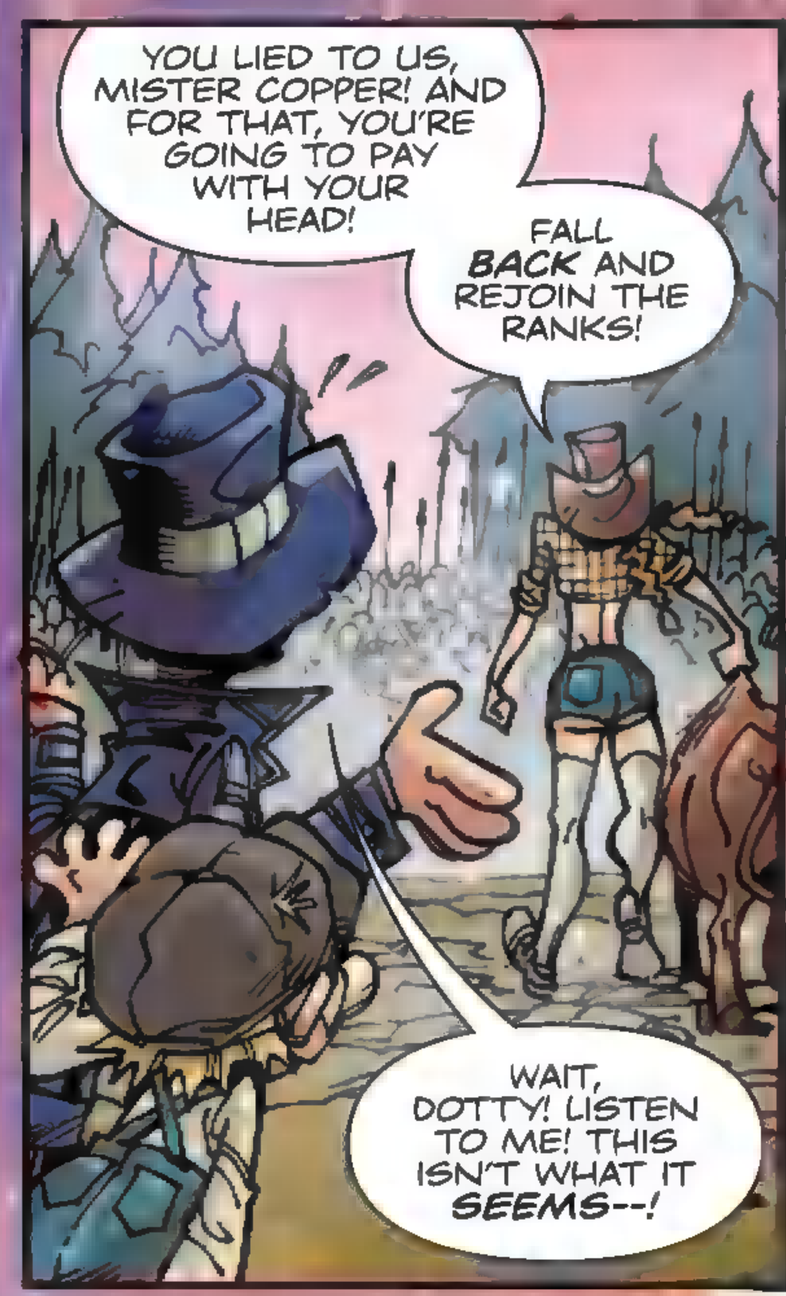

FURTHERMORE, ALL SPIES AND UNDERSIZED TROOPS-- MOST NOTABLY ALL MUNCHKINS DISGUISED AS GARDEN GNOMES-- ARE TO BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY--
FRANKIE, LOOK... ANOTHER ARMY.

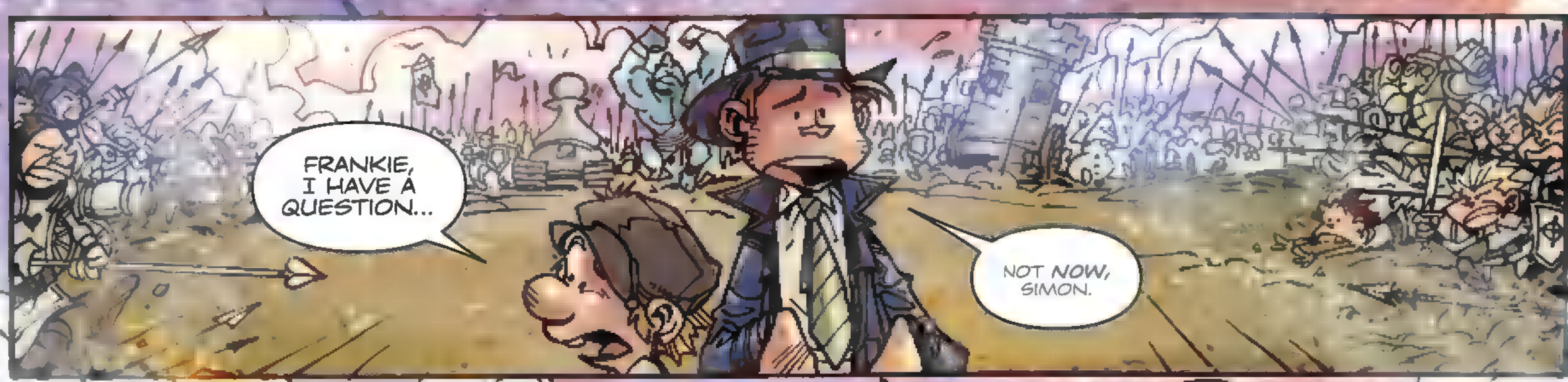

NOT NOW, SIMON, OKAY? I'M KINDA BUSY.
BUT YOU TOLD ME TO LET YOU KNOW WHEN THE ARMY SHOWED UP!



IT'S A TRAP! I KNEW THAT COPPER WAS WORKING FOR THE MADONNAS!
EVERYONE FALL BACK! EVERYONE ATTACK!


IT'S THE WHITE QUEEN! DOTTY, YOU TRAITOROUS WRETCH! I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE TRUSTED!
ME? OH, DON'T YOU DARE PRETEND THIS ISN'T YOUR DOING, YOU LITTLE WITCH!

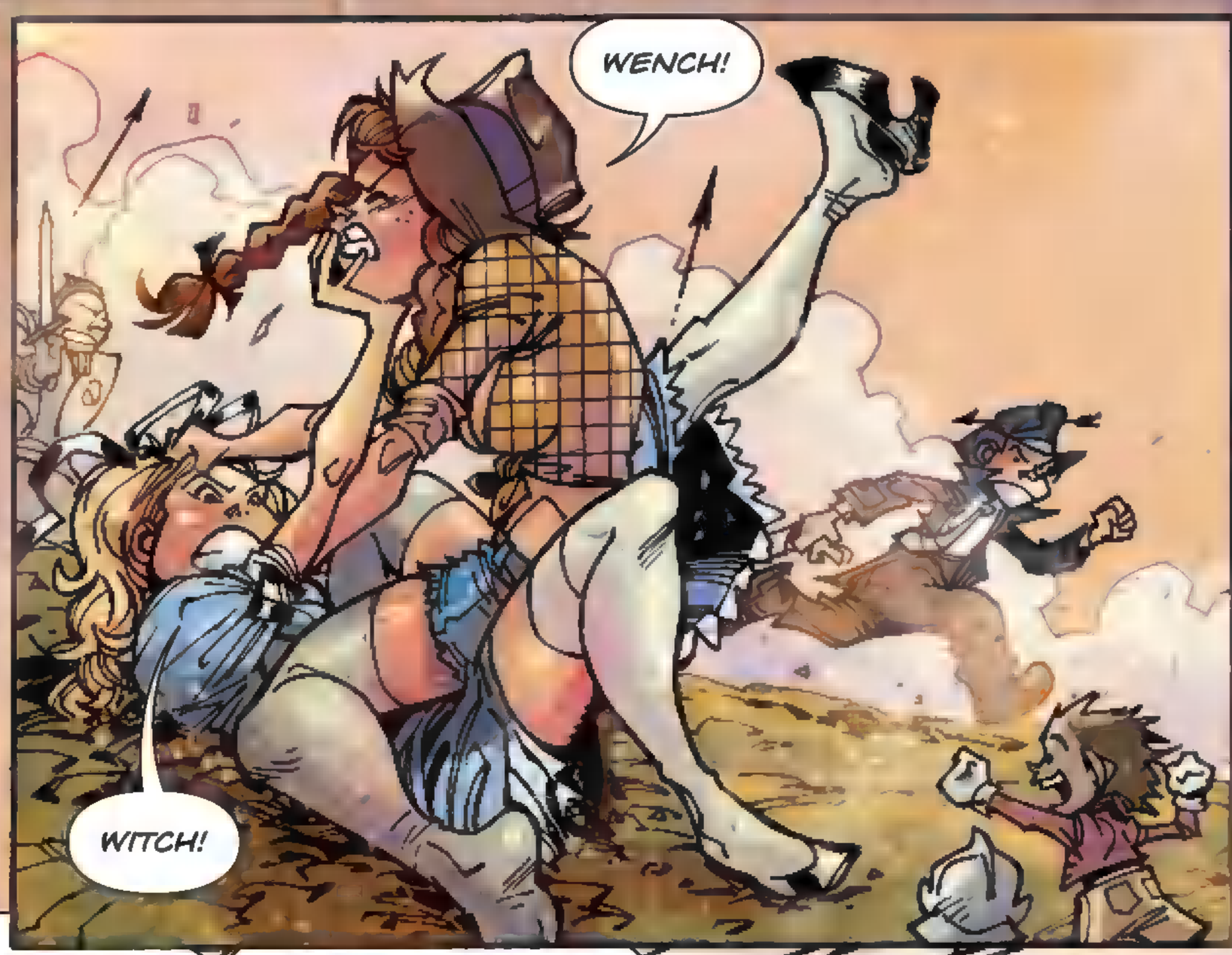

YOU LIED TO US, MISTER COPPER! AND FOR THAT, YOU'RE GOING TO PAY WITH YOUR HEAD!
FALL BACK AND REJOIN THE RANKS!
WAIT, DOTTY! LISTEN TO ME! THIS ISN'T WHAT IT SEEMS--!


FRANKIE, I HAVE A QUESTION...
NOT NOW, SIMON.

STOP! WAIT! YOU ALL NEED TO LISTEN TO ME!

THAT'S THE ONE! THAT LIAR!
KNAVES! OFF WITH HIS HEAD! MULTIPLE TIMES!

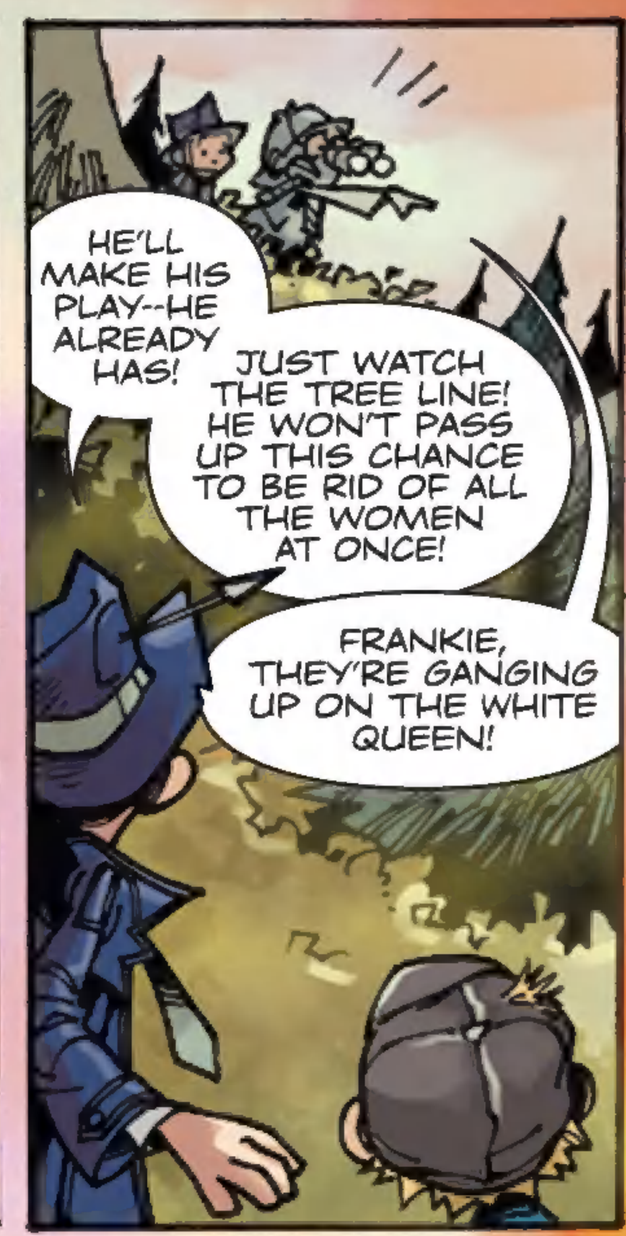
AWGH! WILL YOU PLEASE LISTEN TO ME? THE WHITE QUEEN IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE!
I TOLD HER USHER, JACK FROST, THAT THE MEETING WAS NEXT WEEK ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN! THAT MEANS SHE HAS AN INSIDER!

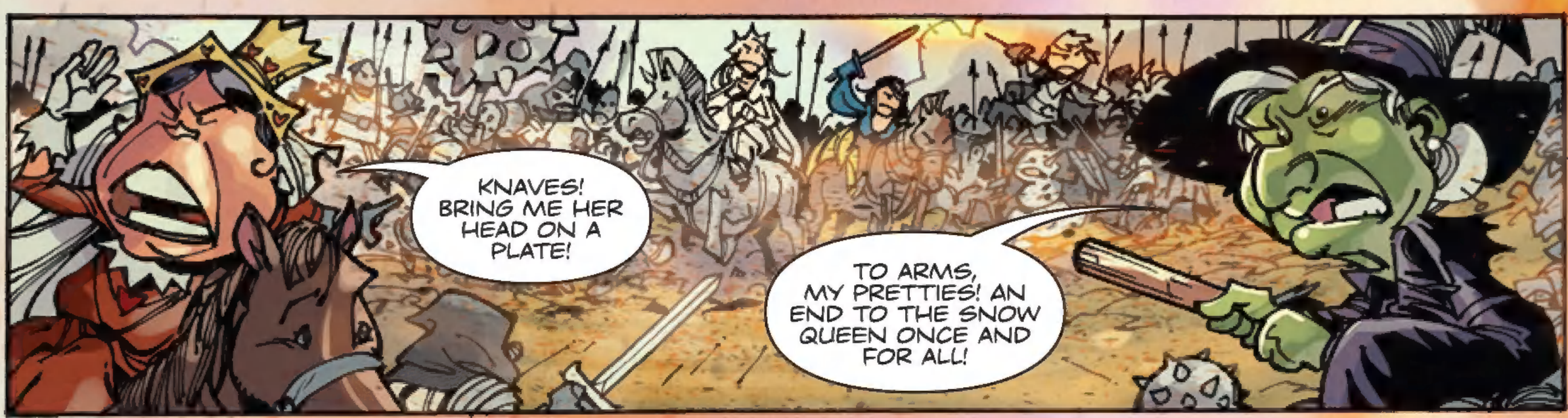

WENCH!
WITCH!

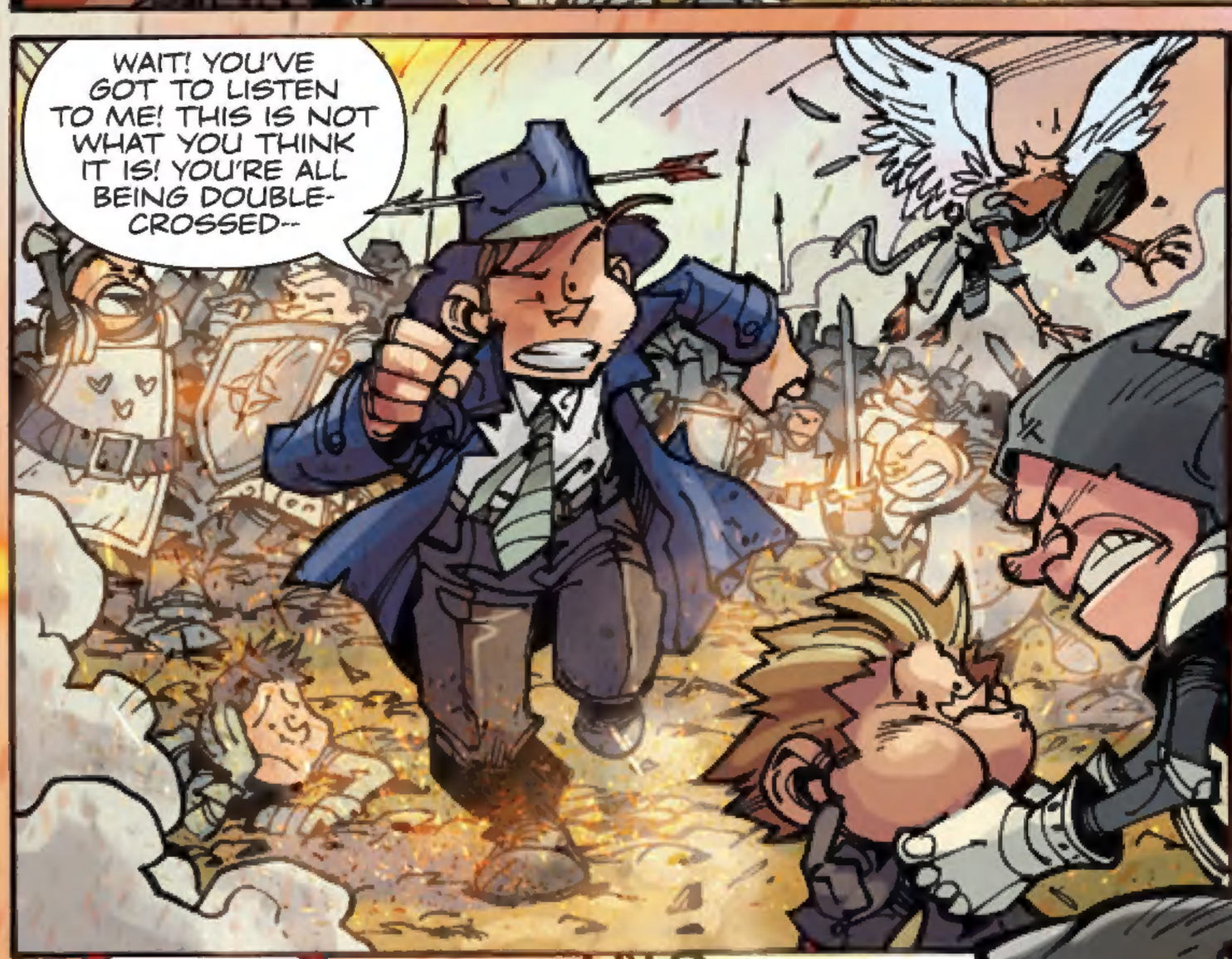
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD CARVE UP THIS TERRITORY WITHOUT ME, DID YOU? WELL, YOU FOOLISH HAGS HAVE ANOTHER THOUGHT COMING!
THE WHITE QUEEN HAS HER SPIES AND SOURCES! AND THIS TIME, I MEAN TO FINISH YOU PATHETIC HARRIDANS ONCE AND FOR ALL!
CAN I ASK THAT QUESTION NOW?
SURE. GO FOR IT!
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
EVERYTHING WE PLANNED FOR!

MARLIE! WATSON! ANY SIGN OF OUR GUY YET?

NOT YET, FRANKIE! WE'RE KEEPING OUR EYES PEELED!


HE'LL MAKE HIS PLAY--HE ALREADY HAS!
JUST WATCH THE TREE LINE! HE WON'T PASS UP THIS CHANCE TO BE RID OF ALL THE WOMEN AT ONCE!
FRANKIE, THEY'RE GANGING UP ON THE WHITE QUEEN!


KNAVES! BRING ME HER HEAD ON A PLATE!
TO ARMS, MY PRETTIES! AN END TO THE SNOW QUEEN ONCE AND FOR ALL!


WAIT! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME! THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK IT IS! YOU'RE ALL BEING DOUBLE-CROSSED--

BACK WITH YOU, SCURVY TOAD!

UHFF!
CRACK!

ANY LAST WORDS, TRAITOR?
SURE I DO, PAL.
THEN MAKE THEM GOOD, AND SAY THEM QUICKLY.

LISTEN TO ME! YOU'VE ALL BEEN BETRAYED... BUT NOT BY EACH OTHER!
SOMEONE IS PULLING YOUR STRINGS! THAT PERSON IS YOUR TRAITOR!
HE'S PLAYING YOU AGAINST EACH OTHER TO WEAKEN YOU!

YOU! YOU LED US HERE, POLICEMAN--
NO! THINK ABOUT IT! WHO AMONG US COULD TRAVEL BETWEEN REALMS WITH SUCH EASE?
WHO CAN BE IN ALL PLACES AT ONCE?
I SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE SIGNS. A GUY WHO ONLY EATS LEAN MEAT AND PLUM PIE. DOES THAT SOUND FAMILIAR?

WELL, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF JACK SPRAT? HOW ABOUT LITTLE JACK HORNER?
WHO'S GOING TO MOVE BETWEEN ALL OF OUR WORLDS? SOMEONE WITH INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF EVERY STORY KNOWN TO MAN.

BECAUSE HE APPEARS IN EVERY STORY. JACK AND JILL. JACK FROST. SPRING-HEELED JACK.

AND SOMEONE I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE AGAIN: JACK THE RIPPER.
JACK IS EVERYWHERE, AND NOWHERE AT ALL. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, KNAVE? OR SHOULD I SAY, "JACK?"

FROM NOW ON, IT'S JUST JACK.

To Be Concluded...

SON OF ULTRON